

# EveRyTHing YoU nEver waNTed tO SeE.

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# SILENT HILL:3



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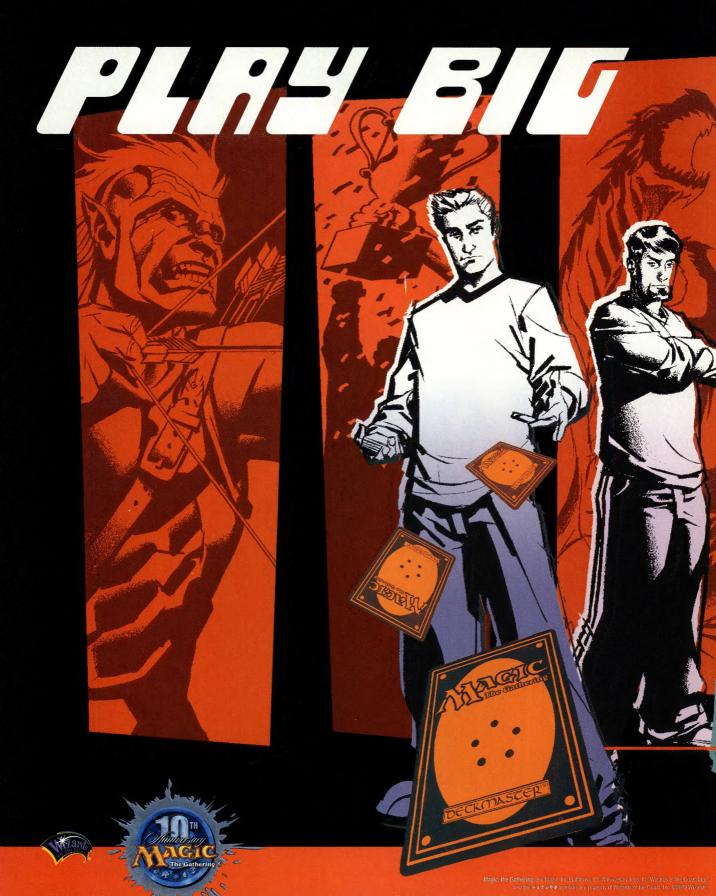




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#### GET MORE FROM YOUR GAMES

#### WHAT WAS THAT? I DIDN'T CATCH IT. MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO REPEAT IT...



"You have dishonored this temple, my family, my family's tortoise and this pen!" I say, moving fluidly into the Crooked Hamster stance. Tom bristles and drops into his own trademark Slouching Bag pose. "Um...before you two get into it, how did he dishonor your family's tortoise?" asks Andrew.

"What's a tortoise?" adds Caroline.

"It's like a turtle," says Andrew.

"Tiny wheels," I say through gritted teeth. "And glue."

At this, Tom lets out a piercing scream and launches himself at my head. Yep, there's definitely something in the air on GMR this month. Well, Tom, for starters. That's what happens when you bust out all the fighting games. Between the excellent Soul Calibur II, the near perfection of Sega's re-mixed Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution, and the recent excavation of James' favorite fighting game of all time (see our fighting games feature—page 59), there's a lot of violence around. Couple that with David's controller-hurling tantrums courtesy of Miss Croft's latest outing and it's no wonder we're at each other's throats. Oh-and is it me, or do David and Andrew look



#### THE OPEN-FOR-A-SEQUEL ENDING **ART DIRECTOR**

Hovering over the mountaintops, the soft glow of the full moon washes over Gerry's battle-worn soul. The fighting is over, but there is a new decision to be made: return to his pumpkin seed farm or avenge the untimely death of Tom, his childhood friend and training partner. He stares into the dark silence, into his unknown future.

#### THE CONFUSING ENDING ames miel ke **EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

After stabbing Tom in the back 27 times with a plastic spork, Mielke won the tournament by defeating his evil clone, who was sent back in time from the future with an important warning about global warming, the government of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Arena Football League. Only, it wasn't his clone...

#### THE SURPRISE TWIST ENDING ROLINE KING DESIGNER

Shortly after her triumphant return to the mainland, Caroline resumed her career in the world of women's professional wrestling. During her comeback match for the undisputed world championship, an errant kick to the jaw from her opponent revealed the shocking truth. Caroline King was not what she seemed. She was a robot

#### THE HOLLYWOOD ENDING DAVID CHEM MANAGING EDITOR

"I'm not going to let you die down here!" Those words gave the young boy the extra strength he needed to reach up and take David's hand. The arena began to crumble as the two made their escape. As the final explosion decimated the compound, David's trophy rolled to a stop at his feet. "Here, Kid. This one's for you.

#### THE TRAGIC ENDING **NEWS EDITOR**

The tournament was only a means to an end. Tom pursued his nemesis to the very ends of the Earth but was ended by Mielke's foul blade. Spirit separating from body, Tom looked up with one last thing to say to the man on whom he'd swore revenge-the man who killed his family, ruined his credit rating, and dented his car: "Ass."

#### THE BAD ENDING ANDREW PFISTER WRITER

Thanks for playing!

ACP

GAME OVER



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YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. WE HAVE SNAPPY COMEBACKS THAT DON'T PROVIDE ANY REAL ANSWERS. OH. CANADA!

#### YODA. YO YO YO YO YO-DA

I just saw a video of Knights of the Old Republic, and what I saw was surprising, although whether in a good or bad way is entirely based on the answer vou give me. In the video. there is a character who is obviously Yoda. Now, my question is how is that possible, considering the game takes place almost 3,000 years prior to Episode IV, and Yoda made it plainly clear that he was 900 years old

knowledge hasn't ever been touched on, or is the development team using creative license, something I can't see LucasArts allowing them to do? I would really like to know.

in Episode VI "...when 900

years old you reach look as

good you will not." (Sorry, I

had to quote it). Now, is the

character I saw another

member of Yoda's race,

something that to my

Terence Grant

Nope, it's not Yoda, but he is a member of the same unnamed race. Yodites? Yodalescents? Yodlers?

#### UH\_NO?

Hey, i have downloaded Kazza p2p file sharing for the purpose of music. i

recently came across a load of computer games. like, the full versions. i was wondering if this is legal to download since i don't have the games, or if you quys (and girls) think it's right.

David

You want to know if downloading full versions of computer games that you admittedly do not own is legal? What's happened to our education system?



I've only recently come to your magazine, and overall, I heartily approve. Including all consoles and PCs in one magazine is quite handy and prevents me from having to listen to the now-incessant console-related whining going on at a certain PC magazine. My only complaint with your publication is the common use of initials for the names of many game titles in your review section. Much of the time, the full name of the title is given in the body of the review, so no problem there. But I had to read the review for "SOFII" twice before I figured out what game you were talking about fit was the reference to Fortune

magazine that finally clued me in). I realize that game titles are becoming painfully long and unwieldly, but please keep in mind that not all of us attend E3 or religiously follow gaming news and may require that a certain amount of the house fall on our heads. Thank you.

Greg David-Craft

Space constraints for our headlines often prevent us from spelling out entire names, but we try to reference it in the full text whenever possible. Here's a handy guide for some current acronyms that may cause bafflement:

BG&E - Beyond Good & Evil LOI - Lament of Innocence (Castlevania) THUG - Tony Hawk's Underground DBZ: LOGII - Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku II POP - Prince of Persia



#### FILM STRIPPED

I just came back from the theater, having watched *Terminator 3* (which by the way was a decent movie). That got me to thinking about the video game that is going to becoming out for it and the potential it COULD be a fantastic game. But as we all know, most games based off a movie license turn out to have pretty terrible gameplay. Has anyone come up with a theory why that is? Also, what's everyone's favorite movie game of all time at *GMR*? Thanks for the great magazine and keep it up!!

RJ Kern

The leading theory is quite simple: money. Quick and easy money, and lots of it. Just look at how Enter the Matrix is doing on the sales charts. Even when given enough time (Shiny had more than two years to work on the game), it can still turn out to be garbage because everyone knows it's going to sell based on the name on the box and a fancy commercial. Good movie-licensed games can be made; they just usually aren't. If we had to pick a favorite, Goldeneve gets top marks, and

#### WRITE US: GMR@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

honorable mention goes to the *Alien vs. Predator* series and a select number of *Star Wars* games.



#### PLAYING FAVOURITES

I went to EB, bought some games, and got your magazine for free. That being said, I can't understand why all the hate for *The Matrix* game. I mean, some of us low-class simpletons may enjoy the game (maybe that's why it's a top-seller). I don't even like the *Matrix* movies but enjoyed the mindless ass-kicking I doled out in the game. In fact, it took 2 months for my local video store to actually have a copy to rent in stock. That has to account for something, right? My inside sources say Tom is still upset he was passed over for the leading role. Either that or you hate Keanu Reeves since he is Canadian.

Which leads me to my other gripe on your Gameplanner for the month of July. You commerate Bank Employees Day in some Third World country but you don't give any love for your friendly neighbors to the north by failing to mention Canada Day? We give you hockey, the snowmobile, Michael J. Fox, Jim Carrey, and Trish Stratus and this is the thanks we get? I smell an anti-Canada agenda at your magazine. But other than the above, your magazine is great.

Terry

We think back to our 8th grade classroom and the words of wisdom posted next to the hot-lunch menu on the wall: "Just because something's popular doesn't make it right." Considering how much time and money was invested in the project, Enter the Matrix should have been much more than it turned out to be. Actually, we would be interested in finding out how many copies were returned after a day or two. And we love Canada, what with its natural beauty, friendly populace, excellent beer, and "iced hockey." Remind us when Canadian Thanksgiving rolls around, and we'll make amends. You celebrate it in October, right? You crazy bastards!

#### THE NAME GAME

I have been playing SOCOM for several months now and enjoy the online play more than anyone should. I also enjoy seeing the creative names that I find in different rooms. I have recently encountered two names that I really took offense at. The first is "OSAMA BIN LADEN" (that may not have been exactly as it was spelled but you get the idea). It is the first time I have wanted to shoot someone on my own team. The second was just as rude: "DC SNIPER." You need to seek counseling. Can't you find names that reflect a friendlier side of killing? At least wait 10 to 15 years. Finally, I would like to close by saying to the Canadians...there is more to life than hockey. It is hard to communicate with your team when you are arguing about which goalie is better. (EH!!)

Chuck

One thing you have to remember about online gaming is that, just like in the real world, people are tasteless jerks who think they're being funny. The benefit? They do us a favor and identify themselves as jackasses right away. If only these people would extend the same courtesy when walking down the street. Society could use a nice punch in the face from time to time.



#### I AM LOOKING FOR SOME SEQUELS

If you've ever played Shenmue, then you know it's a great game. It's one of those games that pulls you in and captivates you, and now the tentative final game in

the series is in jeopardy of never being released. In an interview, when asked about *Shenmue III*, Yu Suzuki said that he would make the game if there was enough demand for it. Some Shenmue fans have created a petition to show Mr. Suzuki that there is demand for the game. The petition can be found here: http://www.petitiononline.com/shen1986. Please sign it or put this e-mail in your magazine. Thanks for your time.

Matt

#### WE DON'T PLAY GAMES EITHER

Bet you don't get this often. I am an avid reader of your magazine, but the kicker is that I haven't touched a video game in my LIFE! As one of my friends has said in his letter to you, I love to read Game Geezer and Post. Go figure, since snarky comments and crazy old men are always hilarious. But I read your game reviews. But why, you ask? "Why would she bother? Why would some psychopathic person not play video games, read video game reviews, and then write us about said reviews?" But I think your reviews are wonderfully written!

"Oh. That's nice."

See, flattery gets 'em every time. Of course, I also assume that you will not be easily snared by said flattery, so I'll try to write a worthwhile letter.

The thing is, I just want to sincerely thank you for your magazine. I look forward to reading Game Geezer every month. (Which my dear friend Braxton sends to me via e-mail.) It's slowly becoming an obsession. Thanks for brightening my day once a month.

Caitlin from NC

Thanks for the kind words, Caitlin. It's nice to hear from people who actually take the time to read what we write, even if they don't really care. That's called "accessibility," and we're all about it. We also forwarded your letter to the Geezer, who remains in seclusion in his summer cabin somewhere in the Northwest Territories:

Game Geezer responds: "'Caitlin'? What the hell kind of name is that? Damn kids. Back in my day, we had real names. Like Jane. And Skip. And Alphonse. Glad you like the column, though. Now how'd ya like to make an old man happy the right way?"

Ugh, sorry about that. We'll talk to the doctor about increasing his meds.



Fiver want to chait with a GMR editor? No Well, OK then. There are plenty of other people to talk to on the official GMR imessage board. Go to www.gamers.com and check if you But play moe) or well.



We want to do something different with this section of Post, so we asked the people who would appear in it the most. Hey, that rhymes! If you have an idea to contribute, visit The Family at http://boards.gamers.com, then click on the Gamers.com boards link. But be warned, The Family is not to be trifted with Here's how it came to be

"Let's organize one... I call Godfather:
Don Oracle...has a ring to it, no?"

- TheTenthOracle

No." - GMR-Milkman

"I'd be the young stupid one that mean well but always gets in the way." - MPMike

"I'd be the oafish man-beast that offer both brutish strength in battle and clumsy comic relief during the offseason" – Condon do

"I'll be the lethal enforcer, who eventually realizes how wrong the life live is and tries to get out, but can't leav the past behind and eventually gets rubbed out by one of you guys." – Kris\_

"If I can't be in the family, then I guess could be the crooked sheriff, Hmm....

Quote of the Month

"Fan fics of GMR would quickly turn in erotica. I'm sorry, Van, but it's true." – NowhereMan

GMR NEWS NETWORK

#### M IN THE NEWS

	NFL STREET	015
EA Discounting the consumer	ful Canada franchisa	

#### BLIZZARD DEPARTURES 016

#### → The creators of *Diablo* head for greener pastures

#### OUTRUN 2 018 →Driving fast and impressing the ladies

#### TALENT 019 → Hiroaki Yotoriyama shows you his soul

#### y fill daki fotoriyana shows you ilis sout

#### FRAG BOX 024 → Falcon Northwest made a PC you can carry around!

#### INTERNATIONAL REPORT 027 →Initial D. Sounds tenacious









→ All kinds of crazy happens in Street, from dudes throwing passes under their legs to QBs shaking linebackers twice their size to big of linemen scoring TDs.



# PLAYERS BALL EA BIG LAUNCHES NFL STREET WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THEIR FRIENDS

PS<sub>2</sub>



EA Big took the opportunity at the annual Camp EA editors' day to announce its new NFL Street franchise. In typical EA "Big" fashion, the company enlisted a few stars from the NFL: Marcellus Wiley of the Chargers, Jeremy Newberry of the 49ers, Ray Lewis of the Ravens, and future Hall of Famer Barry Sanders. After taking to the field for a little touch-football fun, Barry and Ray-Ray retired to the auditorium for a little one-on-one with the game. Apparently, his four years out of the

game have hurt Barry-since Ray trounced

him repeatedly. Practice, Barry, practice.

# STREET BALL

#### EA BIG'S STREET FRANCHISE GOES DEEP

BREAKING NEWS

Remember back on the playground, picking teams for a game of two-hand touch—or, if it was nice and muddy, full-tackle smashmouth football? Imagine that instead of choosing from a motley bunch of 13-year-olds, you had your pick of the NFL's elite players. And imagine that once those players hit the field (or the street or the alley or whatever), there were no rules, no refs, and, most important, no wussy-ass kickers. Then imagine NFL Street, EA Big's next move for its highly successful Street series.

Debuting at this year's Camp EA

(Electronic Arts' annual editors' day in Redwood City), NFL Street follows in the footsteps of NBA Street by giving you a sports experience that has absolutely nothing to do with good sportsmanship and everything to do with showing up the competition.

NFL Street is seven-on-seven football; players play both sides of the ball. So if you pick Jeff Garcia as your quarterback, you better hope he can tackle when he's on D. Plus, any player can play any position, so go ahead, put Warren Sapp in at running back. Just like in NBA Street, there's no clock, you

play until someone reaches a certain score. And, as in *NBA Street*, points are accrued by pulling off spectacular showboat moves. Reach a certain score with your moves and you unlock Gamebreaker mode.

We got a little hands-on time with the game and the action is as fast and ridiculous as promised. Balls stay live, forward fumbles are allowed, and the trick plays have to be seen to be believed. NFL Blitz, this most definitely is not, but fun it definitely is. It should be on shelves in time for the SuperBowl. ■●



# DEFROSTED

KEY PLAYERS LEAVE BLIZZARD

U.S.A.

One day before the release of Blizzard's highly anticipated WarCraft III: The Frozen Throne expansion, the entire gaming world was rocked by the news that highprofile game designer and company frontman Bill Roper had resigned as Vice President of Blizzard North's San Francisco Bay Area studios.

Blizzard North cofounders and 10-year game design veterans Erich Schaefer, Max Schaefer, and David

Brevik, the creative minds behind Diablo. resigned the same day. The four innovators immediately declared their intentions to form

PS2

GBA

a new game design studio and are

In a phone conversation shortly after, Roper confirmed rumors that the exodus was primarily fueled by the refusal of Vivendi Universal management-long interested in selling its gaming unit-to allow the foursome more input.

"We attempted to open up some better lines of communication with Vivendi Universal to gain better insight into what was happening, like their decisions around the sale of our group and the future direction of our company," Roper explained. "We felt very strongly about this. Unfortunately, we found out that this opportunity was not going to be afforded to us, which left our direction very clear."

Roper acknowledged that the new

studio is already thinking strategically about game designs and is fielding phone calls from publishers.

Blizzard

President Mike Morheim responded to the departure by saying, "I speak for everyone in our company when I say how grateful we are to have had the opportunity to work closely with this group of individuals....We wish them nothing but the best and are confident that they will be successful in their future endeavors." I € \_George Jones



#### GAMEPORT VITAL GAME INFO, NOW BOARDING...

#### → Arrivals coming soon

SYSTEM	ETA TITLE	HOW HOT?
GC	AUG F-ZERO GX As we were writing this, our review copy arrived. Jealous?	****
ALL	AUG XIII Ubi Soft's hoping XIII has enough "TWACK!!" and "OOMPH!!"	666
PS2	AUG RPG MAKER 2 We might have to hold a contest	886
PC	AUG HOMEWORLD 2 Seriously, how good a year is the PC having?	65656
PC	SEP HALF-LIFE 2 Except for "anticipation," there are no words to describe our anticipation.	****
GC	SEP ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE Not that we'd do it, but we'd like the option to waste Ewoks.	5555
GBA	SEP FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE  Now we have to be all smart 'n stuff.	***
GC	SEP BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG Cracked? Over easy? Hard boiled? The puns are delicious.	6666
XB	SEP OTOGI It's like Zone of the Enders in feudal Japan.	****
XB	SEP DINO CRISIS 3 It's like Dino Crisisin space.	666
ALL	SEP TIGER WOODS 2004 It could be the best golf game ever.	600
GBA	SEP SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4 It's Mario! Mario! Mario! all over again. Get an e-Reader ready.	6666
GC	OCT VIEWTIFUL JOE Early reviews of the Japanese version: stunning.	6666
GC	OCT KIRBY'S AIR RIDE Early reviews of the Japanese version: surprisingly good.	66
ALL	OCT TONY HAWK'S UNDER GROUND Early reviews of the Japanese version: Tony who?	****
GC	OCT PIKMIN 2 Fresh from Miyamoto's garden, \$0.49/lb.	6666

#### DEPARTURES OUT NOW

SYSTEM	TITLE	GMR SCORE
XB	BRUTE FORCE A good concept with weak design and execution.	6 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	SILENT LINE: ARMORED CORE If you're not already an AC fan, then you can skip it.	7 <sup>no</sup>
PS2	APE ESCAPE 2 It's a lot like the first game, just more of it. "It" being monkeys	. 7/10
ALL	BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS The name is sorta funny. Alas, the game is not.	<b>4</b> <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	NAVAL OPS: WARSHIP GUNNER Complex control keeps this one barely afloat.	6'10
ALL	THE HULK We'd give the movie a 6/10, too.	<b>6</b> /10 ·
ХВ	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 2 Sketchy Xbox Live play isunfortunate.	6′10
PC	RISE OF NATIONS Look at you! You're the King of the World!	8/10
PC	TOTAL WAR: VIKING INVASION Vikings: If they're not lost, then they're fighting someone.	8/10
GC/PS2/XB	SPEED KINGS Crash into me.	710
ALL	MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER Henry Rollins would kick our asses if he saw that score.	6 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	DOWNHILL DOMINATION  Just tweak the trick system and you have a real winner.	7110
XB	MIDTOWN MADNESS 3 There is no known cure for the Midtown Madness.	7 <sup>no</sup>
GBA	WARIO WARE, INC. Nintendo originalty created 400 games, but kept the best.	9/10
GBA	DONKEY KONG COUNTRY It looked and played better on the SNES.	6 <sup>/10</sup>
GBA	SONIC PINBALL PARTY There's a party in my GBA, and everyone's invited!	8/10

# ITSY BITSY...

GET YOUR BIKINI ON. OR OFF

JAPAN

Tired of that one-piece your girlfriend wears, or just want to slip into something more comfortable? Tecmo is offering yet another in a long series of perversions with its sexy line of swimwear based on the outfits in its hit Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball. That's right-now, you too can dress up like Tina, Kasumi (sorry, the Venus isn't available), and Ayane.

Why on Earth has Tecmo decided to branch out into high-fashion beachwear? John Inada, director of sales and marketing for Tecmo, says, "Videogames are a huge part of everyone's lifestyle. With such a

\_More info at www.tecmoinc.com

successful crossover between games. movies, and music, we realized that fashion apparel also needed to be part of this mix. It's just another way of connecting with our trend-setting audience." Supplies of the Team Ninja-designed bikinis are limited, so if you're feeling pretty, you'd better check em out soon. If





This Summer the underdogs have their day.



A GAYLORO FILMS / GERBER PICTURES PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH 900 FILMS A CASEY LA SCALA FILM "GRIND"

MIKE VOGEL VINCE VIELUF ADAM BRODY JOEY KERN JENNIFER MORRISON MANIES BETSY MACKEY LANCE SLOANE EMBIRITATION FROM STRAND

MIKE VOGEL VINCE VIELUF ADAM BRODY JOEY KERN JENNIFER MORRISON MANIES BETSY MACKEY LANCE SLOANE EMBIRITATION FROM STRAND

MIKE VOGEL VINCE VIELUF ADAM BRODY JOEY KERN JENNIFER MORRISON MORGAN STONE MISTER RALPH SALL

MIKE VOGEL VINCE VIELUF ADAM BRODY JOEY KERN JENNIFER MORGAN STONE MISTER RALPH SALL

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PANDORA

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
Crude Humor. Sexual Content and Language

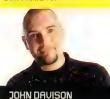
BILL GERBER HUNT LOWRY CASEY LA SCALA \*\*\*\*\* C'ASEY LA SCALA

WARNER BROS, PICTURE 5,2003 Warner Brown An Aughts Reserve

Soundtrack Album on Bulletproof/Atlantic Records
ww.grindmovie.com America Online Keyword: Grind

### PLAYSTATION KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



#### LARA'S DEAD

What the hell happened with Tomb Raider? Arguably one of gaming's most valuable franchises, TR is one of the most notable contributions videogames have made to pop culture. With this knowledge, you'd think it would be treated with a little more care by those responsible. Qualitatively speaking, The Angel of Darkness is embarrassing. It's sloppy, careless, and, worst of all, not enjoyable. As Lara the zeitgeist has become more important than Tomb Raider the game, we've been exposed to videogaming's first example of a star getting fat, rich, and

careless.

XΒ

PC

How can this be rectified? If Lara is to be rescued, it's time for a regime change, It's clear Core is completely out of its depth and can't be trusted to deliver what the franchise deserves. Upstarts like Splinter Cell and Kemco's upcoming Rogue Ops shouldn't be in a position to hand Lara her ass. She should be our reigning queen of cool. Our poster girl. Our Madonna. Instead, she's doing a much more passable impression of a Baldwin brother. She's Anthony Michael Hall before he landed The Dead Zone. She's Axl Rose. Sure, people buy her stuff...but out of habit, not because they actually care anymore.

\_John Davison is Editor-in-Chief of the Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine.

# TIME EXTENDED

WITH MUCH LOVE. SEGA'S OUTRUN 2 IS REVEALED

BREAKING NEWS

Dear Sega: Thank you. Just as we were about to go to print, Sega of Japan released the first ever screenshots of the long-awaited *Outrun 2*, and all of the sudden, the world became a happier place.

Details are scarce, but some juicy tidbits of information have leaked out of the crank case concerning gameplay modes. The Heart meter in the bottom-right corner of the screen relates to the game's Quest mode, in which your driving and the

Quest mode, in which your driving and the

coolness thereof will elicit certain responses from your female passenger. If you want to keep her merely as a status symbol, then the regular Outrun mode takes care of that. The game launches in Japanese arcades this winter, and we expect more details to emerge [as well as news of the inevitable Xbox port] from the Tokyo Game Show, which takes place in early September.

\_More info at www.sega.co.jp







# **GROUND ZERO**

EAANNOUNCES EXPANSION FOR C&C GENERALS

U.S.A.

Command & Conquer has been one of the most successful PC game series ever, and a benchmark for the genre of real-time strategies. Now, the latest best-seller in the series, C&C Generals, is getting its first expansion pack with Command & Conquer Generals: Zero Hour.

Currently in development at EA's Los Angeles studio, Zero Hour won't be a standalone product; you'll need a copy of Generals for the game to run. But once you get the game up and running, you get to enjoy a brand-new 15-mission campaign, as well as 25 new multiplayer

maps upon which to engage the computer or your friends over a LAN or the Internet. There's also a new mode called the Generals Challenge.

No strategy-game expansion pack is



complete without new units and buildings, and Zero Hour has them for each of the three sides, including GLA combat motorcycles. Zero Hour will be on shelves this fall.



#### [BLIPS]

#### Half-Life Movie

According to Daily Variety, Valve's Half-Life franchise is being shopped around Hollywood by talent agency CAA. No word yet on any stars attached to the project, but we see William H. Macy as Gordon.

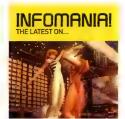
#### Back to the Dungeon

Microsoft Game Studios and Gas Powered Games have announced Dungeon Siege: Legends of Aranna, the first expansion pack for their 2002 hack-n-slasher. Expect swords and spells up the wazoo.

#### **NOLF Prequel**

The next installment in the No One Lives Forever series won't feature Cate Archer in the main role. Contract J.A.C.K. puts you in the evil shoes of John Hack, an operative of H.A.R.M. Get your bad quy on in November:





#### DOA ONLINE

As you no doubt read in our Ninja Gaiden issue (GMR #07), Tecmo's Dead or Alive Online was scheduled for a late October release. But we're back to inform you that this is no longer the case. In the interest of keeping its focus squarely on Ninja Gaiden, Tecmo and Team Ninja have decided to delay DOA Online's release, which is now set to arrive sometime in 2004.

While DOA fans are no doubt bummed, there is a silver lining. Nothing has been set in stone, but it looks like Team Ninia will be using the time to add loads of extra features that will make DOA Online even more the über DOA collection. The most significant of these additions seems to be none other than Dead or Alive 3 playable online. It's likely that the DOA3 characters will undergo the same face-lift as the DOA2: Hardcore characters, courtesy of the DOAX graphics engine. We think that's worth the wait 14

### CLICKS GO HERE NOW. PILGRIM



#### alias.gmrmagazine.com

Are you an Alias fan? Or maybe you just lust after leading lady Jennifer Garner? Visit Gamers.com for your chance to win an Alias Season 1 DVD boxed sets, copies of the Alias game [preview, pg.45], and even a visit to show's set. Just don't embarrass us when you get there. ■

# HIROAKI YOTORIYAMA

DESIGNER OF THE HIGHEST CALIBUR



With Soul Calibur II in our hot little hands, we're inspired to pester its producer, Hiroaki Yotoriyama, and ask a few questions. Here for your perusal are thoughts taken straight from his brain:

What user feedback from the Dreamcast Soul Calibur did you specifically address in making the sequel?

The majority of Soul Blade (PS1) fans requested a mode in which they could collect various weapons, so we produced Weapon Master mode. In that mode, players choose a character to travel around the world, collect weapons, and unlock hidden game features by completing various missions. A variety of weapon types are available and players are able to use any collected weapons in other game modes. Weapon Master is a really fun mode that adds an almost RPG-like element to the game. This type of system is possible only in a console game.

Of the three system-exclusive characters—Link, Heihachi, and Spawn—which is your favorite and why?

Each has unique strengths and weaknesses. It makes it impossible for me to pick one above the others. I see them all as fun to play for their own unique qualities.

Where do you see the series going

from here? Is there any hope Siegfried can be saved from his madness and the Soul Edge, or is he doomed to eternal damnation?

In SC2, Siegfried is still not released from Soul Edge's curse. After collecting all the pieces of Soul Edge and brooding in his own guilt, he has decided to stay deep underground with Soul Edge. We would be happy if our fans are patient enough to wait for the next title in the series to find out what happens to Siegfried.

Please explain to our readers the decision to feature Heihachi as the PS2 version's secret character. We ran a poll on our website to find out what other Namco characters they'd have liked to see as the PS2-exclusive character. Xenosaga's KOS-MOS was the easy favorite, but a surprising number of people picked Dig Dug as their second choice.

We were really curious to see how Heihachi, the strongest fighter among the bare-fisted fighters, could hold up against the weapon-wielding foes of the SC2 world. I really hope players enjoy seeing how Heihachi holds his own—there is something innately tough in a guy who faces a giant ax with nothing more than his hands. By the way, I also would like to see Dig Dug in SC2.....■

#### [BLIPS]

#### Rawk on

Eidos has signed more than 20 bands to appear on the Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home soundtrack. Roni Size, Slayer, and Junkie XL will all help keep the beat while you drive staples into some poor sod's already shattered sternum.

#### Do It for Yellow

Fans of yellow packaging alert! Eidos spin-off, Fresh Games has secured the rights to Irem's 3D shooter R-Type Final. Smaller publishers like Agetec and Empire Interactive were outbid for the rights to wrap the game in ghastly yellow packaging.

# NINTENDO KNOWLEDGE THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



PHIL THEOBALD

#### THE LINK STILL BURNS

We've had to wait an unfair number of months since its Japanese release, but Soul Calibur II is finally here. What that means for GameCube fans is that there's finally a great 3D fighting game to play on the little purple (or black...whatever) box.

XB

PC

PS2

GC

Of course, there are also two other versions of SC2 coming out at the same time. So, what makes the Cube version stand out from the others? Yeah, that's right—Link.

I must admit that it is a little weird seeing our boy Link mixing it up with Mitsurugi and company, but after a few rounds, he seems right at home. It's great watching Link bust out his trademark attacks (boomerang, bombs, that downward thrust from Zelda 2, etc.) in a fighting game. It's also a lot more satisfying seeing Link purmel his opponent here than in Smash Bros., of course).

As cool as SC2 is on GameCube, it's a shame we have to play it with the GameCube's controller. That dinky little D-pad just wasn't made for fighting games (actually, I can't really tell what it was made forl. Some company better come out with a fighting stick, stat.

Yeah, I may complain, but I ain't gonna let some minor control issues keep me from this. Now, how can I play as Lizardman? ■

\_Phil Theobald is Reviews Editor at GameNow.











...DIVIDED BY WAR

The world is on the brink of civil war between the Humans and the Deimos over control of the Great Spirit Stones. The future of both civilizations and the world itself is placed in the hands of feuding twins separated at birth — the idealistic Kharg and the outsider Darc. Immerse yourself in an epic and turnuituous story, where half your battle will be choosing which side to take.

PlayStation。2



LIVE IN YOUR WXRLD.
PLAY IN DURS:



# GMR CHARTS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

PS2 TOP 10

01 TOMB RAIDER AND

02 ENTER THE MATRIX

04 NBA STREET VOL. 2

05 MIDNIGHT CLUB II

RTCW: OPERATION RESURRECTION

RESIDENT EVIL DEAD AIM

03 THE HULK



4

4

6

9

8

5

TBD

THE TOP-SELLING GAMES FOR EVERY SYSTEM FOR JUNE 103





DEFF GREEN

#### STAR BORES

"I waited three years for this?"

Unfortunately, this has been the general reaction to the hugely hyped Star Wars Galaxies, which has been live for about a week. I'm not going to pass judgment on the game right now, because as anyone who plays these MMORPGs knows, it takes time to prove their worth. And I haven't seen nearly enough yet to say whether it's the disaster that some people are declaring.

I can tell you, however, that Sony Online and LucasArts did manage to get the game off on the completely wrong foot with an utterly inexcusable and embarrassing fiasco of a launch day. Most gamers weren't even able to connect at all, and those who did were faced with repeated crashes until Sony finally just gave up and took all the servers down. Two giant game companies with unlimited resources, and this is how they launch their big game? Bravo.

But let's not be bitter. That was just the first day, so we can call it a case of the jitters. The bigger concern is the sinking feeling that, as Gertrude Stein once said about Oakland, "There's no there, there." My first week as a fledgling Wookiee has seen lots of people standing around with not much to do-not exactly the Star Wars experience we were looking for. But we'll see. It could get better 🗺

better bling better better of Street, Street, Street, Street,

TITLE FORMAT SCORE  TOMB RAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS PS2 Lara makes another appearance, but the courts say Simon has to stay 500 yards away.  STAR WARS GALAXIES PC TBD This isn't the Star Wars game you want to play. Just see our Reviews section.  WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE PC THE temptation to make a joke about "snow balls" is overwhelming.  ENTER THE MATRIX Go ahead, don't listen to us.  THE HULK PS2 G  NEVERWINTER NIGHTS: PC 9  SHADDWS OF UNDRENTIDE We have no idea what "undrentide" is, but it's shadowy.  BRUTE FORCE It's going to take a brute force to make us went to play this game again.  MIDNIGHT CLUB II All the Xbox racers catch up with their PS2 kindred.  NBA STREET VOL. 2 PS2 9 Did you hear about NFL Street? No? Turn back a grap to page.  DONKEY KONG COUNTRY GBA 6 Have you ever heard that phrase "it's on like Dankey Kong"? Well, it is.				
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08	ARC THE LAD	3
09	SPLINTER CELL	8
10	DYNASTY WARRIORS 4	6
	XBOX TOP 10	SCORE
01	BRUTE FORCE	6
02	MIDSOCKÉ CLUE II	8
03	THE HULK	6
04	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 2	6
05	ENTER THE MATRIX	4
06	MIDTOWN MADNESS 3	7
07	RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN TIDES OF WAR	8
08	HALO	10
09	MACE GRIFFIN	6
10	NBA STREET VOL. 2	9

	PC TOP 10	THE .
01	STAR WARS: BALAXIES	TBD
02	WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE	9
03	NWN socialists of andrewall	9
04	MORROWIND: BLOODMOON	TBD
05	THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR	6
06	RISE OF NATIONS	8
07	WARCRAFTIII	8
08	GTA: VICE CITY	10
09	PLANETSIDE	5
10	WARCRAFT III COLLECTOR'S ED	. 8

	GBA TOP 10 SCORE
01	DONKEY KONG 6
02	DRAGONBALL Z: LEGACY II 7
03	ADVANCE WARS 2
04	THE HULK 7
05	POKEMON SAPPHIRE 7
06	POKEMON RUBY 7
07	YO GO OH WORLDWIDE EDITION 6
08	FINDING NEMO TBD
09	WARIO WARE 9
10	CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW 8

	GC TOP 10	(CR)
01	SONIC ADVENTURE: DX	7
02	LOZ: THE WIND WAKER	9
03	THE HULK	6
04	WARIO WORLD	7
OS	MEGA MAN	6
06	ENTER THE MATRIX	4
07	ULTIMATE MUSCLE	9
08	FINDING NEMO	6
09	MARIO PARTY 4	8
10	NBA STREET VOL. 2	8

KB

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PS

GBA

GE

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N.G.T.G.E.

# THE XIII FILES DAVID DUCHOUNY LENDS VOICE TO SHOOTER

Ubi Soft has announced the signing of David Duchovny as the voice of the main character in XIII, its new cel-shaded shooter coming out for Xbox, PS2, and PC this fall.

Duchovny joins actress/musician Eve, who stars as Major Nelson, and Adam West (TV's Batman), who lends his inimitable voice to the character of General Carrington.

In XIII, you play a mysterious stranger who washes up on a beach. You have a key to a safe deposit box and a tattoo that reads "XIII"—these are the only clues to your identity. As XIII, you must figure out who you are and why you've become entangled in a plot to assassinate the president of the United States.

Celebrity voice acting in games is becoming so commonplace it's almost expected in new games. Blame it on Vice City getting such big name talent as Gary Busey and Dennis Hopper and the upcoming True Crime: Streets of L.A., which features Christopher Walken and Gary Oldman. I .



# PORTABLE PC

POTENT GAMING PC THINKS ITS A CONSOLE

U.S.A.

XB

PC

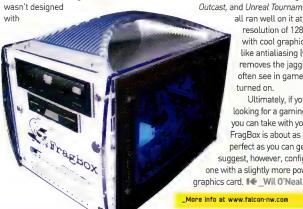
PS<sub>2</sub>

GBA

Falcon Northwest is widely considered to be the founder of the boutique gaming system trend that's lead to the creation of outfits like Alienware and Voodoo PC. While anyone can plunk down some coin for a mainstream rig by companies like Dell or HP, hardcore PC gamers have always had needs that aren't necessarily covered by companies whose primary concern is getting your grandma on the Internet. PC technology has gotten faster, cheaper, and smaller, and these changes have allowed for the creation Falcon's truly portable gaming rig, the FragBox.

Boasting a Lucite case replete with a handle, at 14 pounds the FragBox is designed for the serious LAN gamer. While it's possible to attach a carrying strap (like those made by GearGrip) to a standard desktop PC, there's nothing fun about lugging around a 30- to 40-pound tower. At first glance, skeptics are likely to wonder how much power Falcon could possibly cram into a PC the size of a shoebox, but one look at the FragBox's list of

components shows you that this baby is no slouch. At its heart is a 2.67GHz Pentium 4 processor with 512MB of RAM, an 80GB hard drive, and a 128MB Nvidia GeForce FX 5600 Ultra graphics card. Yep, all that in that tiny box. Of course there isn't a ton of room for expansion (there's a single open PCI slot) but the FragBox



expansion in mind, it was designed for gamers who wish to take their gaming rigs with them wherever they go.

We loaded up some benchmarks as well as some games to see how the FragBox would hold up under pressure and we were pleased with the results. Quake III: Arena, Serious Sam: TSE, Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast, and Unreal Tournament 2003

> all ran well on it at a resolution of 1280x960 with cool graphics effects like antialiasing (which removes the jaggies you often see in games) turned on.

Ultimately, if you're looking for a gaming rig that you can take with you, the FragBox is about as close to perfect as you can get. We'd suggest, however, configuring one with a slightly more powerful

More into at www.faicon-nw.com

#### [BLIPS]

#### Sidewinder Bites It

Microsoft has confirmed the discontinuation of its Sidewinder line of PCgaming peripherals. The company cited a lack of interest by PC gamers for any kind of controller other than a mouse and keyboard.

#### **GBA Tunes**

Datel Electronics will be releasing the Advanced Music Player for GBA. For \$39.99 you'll get a device that allows you to download music from your PC to your GBA for music on the go. Rock.

#### **Activision Sues Viacom**

Activision, which has the exclusive rights to publish games under the Star Trek license is suing Viacom for failing to exploit the franchise and letting it become "stagnant." Insert your own joke here.

#### XB0X KNOWLEDGE THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



**EUAN SHAMOON** 

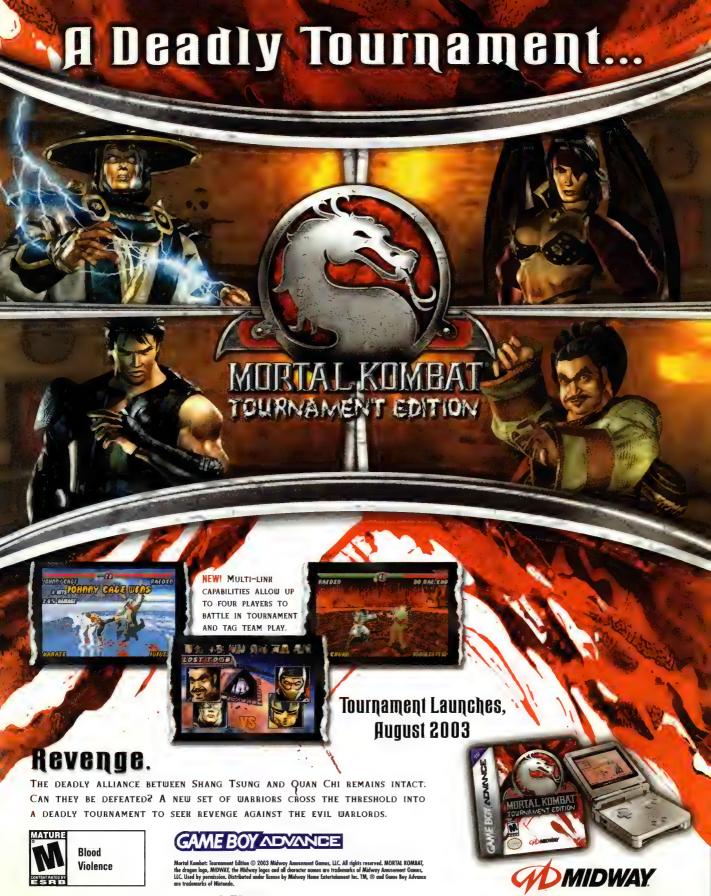
#### HANG THE DJ

The Xbox Music Mixer, which stands as Microsoft's sole hardware announcement at this year's E3, is a bit underwhelming at first glance. While singing karaoke, viewing PC-based digital images on my television screen, or looking at "real-time video and audio effects" are cool concepts, they don't necessarily light my soul on fire.

As I ponder the possibilities of connecting my Xbox to my computer, one stands out above all others: transferring and/or streaming MP3s from my home computer to my Xbox hard drive during gameplay. I have 20GB of MP3s on my Mac and about three CDs worth of music ripped on my Xboxmeaning that when I want to import custom soundtracks into Burnout 2, the ability to draw from my main library would be much better than listening to Kenny G's Faith: A Holiday Album for the thirtythousandth time.

Of course, whether this option will even exist remains unclear. Microsoft's proprietary format for music files is not MP3, meaning that there may be compatibility issues. Mac compatibility is also unannounced as of yet, meaning I (and 10 percent of the personal computer-owning population) may be out of luck. It's a cool idea, and one that would help bring the Xbox credibility as a true "home entertainment" device.

Crief of Xbax Nation



# FRONTX

# AUGUST 2003 IDMF

XB

THE TROUBLE WITH KOBE, AND BYE-BYE AMERICAN PIE CALIBUR 2. F-ZERO GX

SUNDAY

# MONDAY

# MEDNESDAY LUESDAY

THUBSDAY

# FRIDAY

movies, Wes Craven is truly mention this because he because Freddy vs. Jason turns 64 today And also a king among men. We in the world of horror opens this month.



SATURDAY

opens today. Jim gets into awkward situations and The third, and hopefully final, installment of the American Pie franchise something gross Hah. somebody consumes

there aren't any actual days? Seems like a waste

to us.

these extra boxes when calendar makers put in

You ever wonder why



For those of you too young Salactica, it was sort of like Whatever-the Xbox game Star Wars. But not really to remember Battlestar s out today.



hoping the theme song

isn't LL rapping about theaters today. We're

being a cop.

Colin Farrell, Samuel L

in S W.A. T., opening in

Our money's on Freddy lit's Krueger faces off with Jason Voorhees in a battle to determine who's the best homicidal maniac At long last, Freddy the hat



turns 25 today. We'd make spending his birthday in all, but let's face it: He's superstar Kobe Bryant Recently busted NBA a crack about him rich and famous.



#### 8

longer. If you were waiting for Outlaw Golf 2, wait no for another game, well, you'll just have to keep If you were waiting waiting Sorry.



29



60

50

A couple of unconventional today: Freaky Flyers (PS2 racing games come out Xbox) and Solashdown Rides Gone Wild [PS2].



A trio of PS2 releases IRPG Maker 2, Chaos Legion, and

Silent Hill 3) is punctuated

by the release of Ghost expansion disc for Xbox Recon: Island Thunder

## <u>m</u>

for PS2, Futurama for PS2 and Xbox, and Madden 2004 Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution for PS2, Xbox, and PC. Everyone wins, but PS2 owners win more.

legend and former Thunder

Professional wrestling

Hogan turns 50 years old today Whatcha' gonna do

when arthritis comes running all over you?

in Paradise actor Hulk



#### 2

20

<u>ත</u>

for PS2 and Xbox, while

Alter Echo comes out

<u>@</u>

couple of late releases

GameCube gets a

in Madden 2004 and

Freaky Flyers

comes out today for PS2 Trek. Shattered Universe force, .er, live long and As if you needed to buy more Trek games, Star and Xbox. May the prosper



#### 28

Homeworld 2, and Tron 20 for PC, and Soul Calibur 2 for all three consoles.

NFL Fever 2004, and Group

S Challenge for Xbox,

Bombastic for PS2; Otogi,

Mortal Kombat: Tournament

Edition and Pokemon

Pinball Ruby & Sapphire for GBA, as well as the speedy F-Zero GX for GameCube.

28

#### 26





# RNATIONAL

## JEFORLIFE. D MAKES POWERSLIDING A WAY OF LIFE

● JAPAN

Based on a massively popular manga, Initial D Special Stage introduces us to young Tak Fujiwara, a high-school student who has reluctantly entered the world of street racing after some convincing from a group of his friends known as the Akina Speed Stars. Tak's no ordinary boy, though: He's a driving prodigy. Thanks to some Zen-like training from his father, Tak is the fastest racer around, piloting, of all things, an old Toyota AE86 Trueno. The master of the Mount Akina downhill course, Tak regularly finds himself competing against top racers from neighboring towns.

And so the PS2 home conversion of the successful sit-down arcade game developed by Sega Rosso (Sega Rally Championship) is in our grasp, and it's awesome. While it might not be graphically quite as crisp as the Naomi 2-powered arcade unit, it's darn close.

A couple dozen cars taken from the original manga are at your disposal, including some popular with the Fast and the Furious crowd, such as the Celica GT-Four, the Skyline GT-R V-spec, the Civic Type-R, and, of course, Tak's trusty Toyota Trueno. While the normal Arcade mode has you powersliding around a handful of treacherous uphill and downhill courses, the Story mode pits you against Tak's rivals and places you in events straight out of the books. Your first event has you practicing the courses while trying to keep water from spilling out of your cup, while later ones have you battling rivals like Ry Takahashi of the Red Suns and Takeshi Nakazato of the Night Kids.

The downsides: Initial D lacks multiplayer action, and the car models look kind of bland even when compared to older racers like Gran Turismo 3 or Ridge Racer V. The game does convey a thrilling sense of speed, though, and the control (with a Dual Shock controller or Logitech wheel) is excellent.

GMR has learned that Initial D's U.S. license holder, TOKYOPOP, is planning to release the animated series on DVD beginning this September to accompany its manga line (up to volume 7). Even better, TOKYOPOP is currently negotiating with several interested game publishers to bring the game Stateside. Let's just hope it adds iLink support. ■€





← Initial D is a sweet blast of the oldschool arcade-style racing Sega's best known for. Developed by Sega Rosso (formerly AM3)which has also created Sega Touring Car Championship and the Sega Rally series-Initial D gives Ridge Racer a run for its powerstiding money. And it's coming to the States.

ΧB

PC

PS2

**GBA** 





→ If you want to brush up on Initial D's backstory, you can find both the translated manga and, coming soon, the anime, in stores courtesy of TOKYOPOP.









Here at *GMR*, we preview games a little differently. To ensure that our previews are as relevant as possible, we feature only titles that will be released within six months. We also record our level of excitement about the game with cool little flames. Previews are not reviews—they're merely a guide as to how good a game-in-progress is looking. It's a snapshot. If we're not very excited by it, the game gets one or two flames. If we're taking a wait-and-see attitude, expect to see three flames. Over and above that, you can be we're pretty excited. It's our duty to tell you want to be a source of the second of t





→ This giant electrified millipede-lookin' guy to your left is one of the most impressive bosses in Ologi, and a prime example of Just how fantastic the art design is. If Boeing-sized bugs actually existed, we imagine that this is how they'd look.











RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

# OTOGI: MYTH OF DEMONS

DSYSTEM XB DEVELOPER SEGA DEVELOPER FROM SOFTWARE

#### WALK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG SWORD

Here at the *GMR* office, we like to bandy about such cryptic phrases as "the water springs eternat," "the fire burns deep within," and "the wind breaks with a terrible ferocity." It makes us sound smart and noble and all that junk. So imagine our delight when we dove into a playable and nearly complete version of From Software's *Otogi*, a beautiful action game with a funny name that treats its subject matter with a certain degree of class—one that magazine editors could never hope to achieve.

You play as Raiko, an undead warrior chosen by the powers that be to cleanse the landscapes of ancient Japan of a demonic plague. While there's plenty of combat on solid ground, *Otogi's* many monsters must be defeated with aerial-based maneuvers—and this is where the game gets cool. After launching into a double-jump, you can perform an invisible dash in the air and then use an upward sword strike to gain more altitude. And if you're good enough, you can stay airborne indefinitely.

To get the job done properly, Raiko can equip an assortment of swords and support items that you can either purchase or find in the game's 25 levels. Each weapon has specific attack and defense attributes, and some have

other special characteristics that help in battle (for example, one particular weapon will increase in attack power as you take damage). Raiko uses two different physical attacks: normal and strong sword strikes. The former provides for rapid offense maneuvers, while the latter is useful for clearing out a large group of foes or for laying waste to your surroundings. Plus, there's plenty of environment to destroy. Houses, trees, stone columns, wooden floors, giant crystals...vou're even rated on your bulldozing skills at the end of each level. Didn't get a good grade your first time through? No problem-to finish the job, you can go

back into any level you've cleared. This not only affords you an extra opportunity to make a mess out of things, but it's also a handy tactic for gaining more experience points and earning more money for new toys.

We've had a few problems with the camera, but those notwithstanding, we're happy with damn near everything else. Excellent presentation and artistic beauty put *Otogi* very close to the top of our list of this year's most eagerly anticipated Xbox titles. ■

GMR SRYS → The knockout combo of Otogi and Ninja Gaiden has us thinking we've died and gone to Ninja Heaven. Yes, there really is a Ninja Heaven.

→ HOW HOT... 6 6

RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

# DINO CRISIS 3

CISSISTEM XB | CIPURISHER CAPCOM | CINCUR INFO CAPCOM JAPAN

#### WARNING! THIS DINO MIGHT BITE

For the Xbox-exclusive sequel Dino Crisis 3, Capcom decided to splice Jurassic Park's DNA with genetic material from 2001: A Space Odyssey. Thus, 500 years after Dino 2, a team of space commandos must disable a crazed computer-controlled spaceship full of dinosaurs that's speeding toward Earth. For now, we'll put aside the question of how the dinosaurs wound up on the spaceship.

For starters, don't expect another PlayStation-style *Dino Crisis*. Though the series was once *Resident Evil's* compelling first cousin, it's now a horror-free version of Sega's action shooter *Gun Valkyrie*. In all three of these, a single player controls a guntoting character from a third-person perspective, fending off attacks by nonhuman assailants. But the differences are significant, including *Dino's* light exploration elements and casting of dinosaurs as the sole villains.

PS2

Dino 3 introduces other changes: Old heroine Regina has been replaced by some new and improved gunslingers. Each carries a slightly different set of primary weapons that can be charged or shot in bursts, and limited-use helper robots called Wasps can attack or solve puzzles. All of the characters now use jetpacks, creating the twist that changes the garne's flow from Evil to Valkyrie: Jumping, hovering, and climbing add significant action to what was previously a more deliberate formula.

Add to the mix the machinations of the aforementioned spaceship's malicious HAL 9000-like computer, Mother. You walk (or hover) from shiny metallic room to shiny metallic room, disabling Mother's electronic defenses while skinless teleporting dinosaurs and mutated organisms try to snack on you and your offscreen teammates.

Unfortunately, offscreen is a key phrase in Dino 3. Even though the Xbox has propelled the backgrounds into above-average 3D after Dino 2's flat, pre-rendered diversion, our beta version is plagued with distinctly uncomfortable camera angles and impeding jumps, and it requires blind shooting at hordes of offscreen enemies. Though we're skeptical that the camera will be completely fixed by the September release date, we can always pray for zooming out or better angles, right?

GMR SRYS → A little tweaking here and there could make a real *Crisis* of this sleeper.

→ HOW HOT...













Shoot enough dinos and you'tl live to see some of Capcom's most finely rendered cinematics to date. If you care. And you do care, don't you?



#### ROADKILL

DISVISTER GC/PS2/XB DPUBLISHER MIDWAY DEVELOPER TERMINAL REALITY

Stradding the dividing line between GTA: Vice City and Stephen King's The Stand, Midway's postapocalyptic car-combat game features road warnins, lewid behavior, ribald radio station humor, single and multiplayer modes, and more than 30 cars salvaged from the junk pile and armed to the teeth. Player's can even impale pedestrians with their newly souped up hunks o' junk, which we know is going to go over just great with some of you.

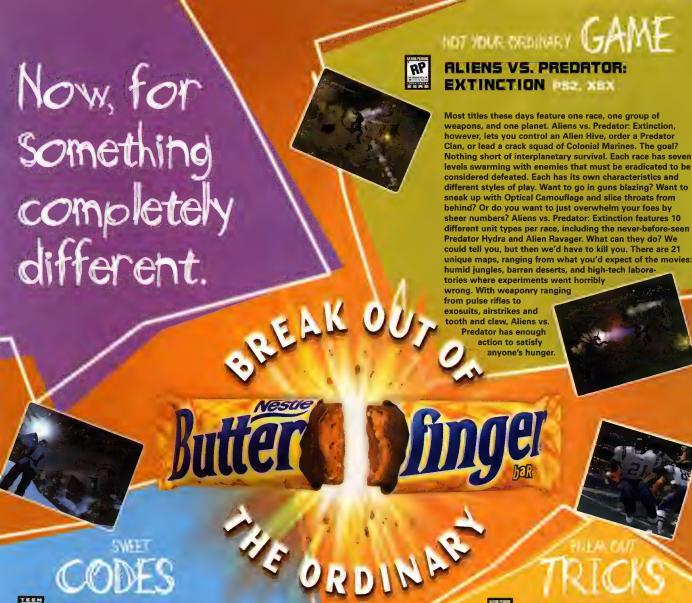
RELEASE | SEPTEMBER







→ HOW HOT...



TEEN

#### NIGHTFIRE PAR XEX. GC

#### MIDST DODGE

The following codes must be entered at the Passcode screen: Unlock all multiplayer scenarios: GAMEROOM

Demolition mode: TNT GoldenEye Strike mode: ORBIT Protect mode: GUARDIAN Uplink mode: TRANSMIT Assassination mode: SCOPE

UNLOCK BUILDINGSTEEL STEEL

Jaws: DENTAL Oddjob: BOWLER Xenia: JANUS Goldfinger: MIDAS Tuxedo Bond: BLACKTIE Unlock all: PARTY

#### LANGE BURNINGS AND REAL PROPERTY.

Alpine Escape: POWDER
Double Cross: BONSAI
Night Shift: HIGHRISE
Chain Reaction: MELTDOWN
Phoenix Fire: FLAME
Deep Descent: AQUA
Island Infiltration: PARADISE
Countdown: BLASTOFF
Equinox: VACUUM

Get all upgrades: Q LAB Laser upgrade: PHOTON Upgrade missiles: LAUNCH Extra sniper ammo: MAGAZINE Explosive scenery: BOOM



NFL BLITZ PRO

THERE IS NOT

Like playing the all new and improved Blitz, but still long for the days of old? Worry no more—with only 10,000 credits, you can turn to the Blitz Shop and buy Blitz Classic and have the best of both worlds.

- Tired of doing an octopus impersonation when you have to pile in a bunch of codes at the loading screen? Buy the Butterfingaz Secret Game Mode in the Blitz Shop for 50,000 credits to play the mode that only the Blitz coders knew about!
- If you like the matchup of David Vs Goliath, you can play with three-inch dwarves versus 30-foot giants in a battle of speed versus brawn for 100,000 credits!

Neetlife and Butterfinger are trademarke at Neetlife - BUTZ and MDIWAY are registered trademarks of Michaya Armusantos (Tenna, Line 2 and Armusantos (Line) and Armusantos (Line) and Armusantos (Line) and Armusantos (Line) are trademarked (Line) and Armusantos (Line) and Armusantos (Line) and Armusantos (Line) are trademarked (Line) and Armusantos (Line) and Armus

DARE TO LOG ON TO BUTTERFINGER.COM

#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

#### SPHINX

OSYSTEM GC/PS2 OPENIGHEN THO ODEVELOPER EUROCOM

#### THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIAN



The main character is Sphinx, an androgynous demigod who fancies a sparkling sword and blowpipe (check please!]. Swordplay is entertaining. but this warrior running through temples, pulling on random levers, and pushing large stones seems like a waste of his true (and far more exciting) abilities.

However, taking control of the mummy Tutankhamen makes figuring out enigmatic environments an experience to be truly enjoyed. Tutankhamen conveys a wicked sense of humor (for a dead guy), as illustrated by his "I don't really wanna be here" expressions and his nonchalant manner while getting electrocuted, flattened to a pancake, and set aflame-all of which are necessary to negotiate his levels. There's something entertaining about the way the blase Tutankhamen relates to the challenge that we find especially endearing. If

GMR SAYS → Mum-Ra--now there was one









**DITTER FRHO** 

OSYSTEM PSZXXB OPUBLISHER THO CIDENSLOPER OUTRAGE ENTERTAINMENT

#### GEL GONE WILD

XB

PS2

GC

At their best, 3D platform games benefit from wacky stories, various levels with unique gameplay, and eye-catching visuals. Thanks to some shape-shifting space goop and a clever three-fold gameplay setup, Alter Echo seems to have these basics well covered.

Imagine a super Silly Putty capable of being made into just about anything, and you have multiplast. It's pretty powerful stuff that can only be found on a single planet in the entire universe-dubbed Proteous-and now, it's alive and determined to destroy all of humanity.

Unfortunately, goop is just thatgoop. Many of the enemies and environments we've encountered here lack the personality to match the game's psychedelic look. Much cooler-looking is the hero Nevin,

whom players must guide across this thoroughly hostile planet in an effort to save us all. Nevin's supersuit has been crafted from multiplast. enabling him to quickly shift between stealth, melee, and gun forms. Finding the right form to use in the right situation is crucial to your success-and Nevin's.

Nevin's suit also allows the player to stop time and combo attack multiple baddies. A rhythm minigame requires precisely timed button presses in order to chain together combos. Succeed and Nevin unleashes his attack in a surrealistic state of suspended time. 14

GMR SAYS → All the pieces appear to be here. Let's hope the final release pulls it all together into something...solid?

HOW HOT ... 6 6









DSYSTEM PS2 CIPURLISHER SAMMY STUDIOS DOBUBLIOPER ASMIK ACE

The latest entry in the ever-popular genre of "overzealously rendered real-world airplanes flying high and occasionally fighting lumbering mechs above a war-torn Earth in the near future" is Sammu's Lethal Skies II, and it appears to nail all of those points nicelu. Featuring 19 planes, 20 sorties, and plenty of extras, Skies already feels great, although hardcore sim-sters may find the arcadey controls a real turnoff.

RELEASE | SEPTEMBER







→ HOW HOT...

32

Unlock the exclusive mini-game!



LINKABLE! - Head to head action for 2 players\*



Collect Spirit Balls and Digivolve to Beast Form!



**NEW FEATURE! Collect** Ancient Spirits to Digivolve to Ancient Form!

\* 2 Player mode requires each player to use a separate Game Pak



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GAME BOY, ADVANCE

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#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

#### BILLY HATCHER & THE GIANT EGG

I SYSTEM GC I I PUBLISHER SEGA - I DEUBLOPER SONIC TEAM

#### CAN'T MAKE AN OMELET...

Billy Hatcher & The Giant Egg is easily categorized—it's an egg-rolling game—but that's not a convenient subject for comparison. Is it a good egg-rolling game? How can you tell? Has anyone ever made an egg-rolling game before?

Such are the risks of defining new territory, but Sonic Team has plenty of fresh ideas to go with the fresh poultry. Leaving Sonic behind has cleared the table for new gameplay elements and smoother presentation. Billy can move fast when he wants to, but he's not bound by Sonic's need to outrun the

camera at every turn.

Besides running like hell and rolling eggs, Billy can bounce, toss, raise, and hatch his eggs. He also uses them to crush enemies (the Egg Smash and Egg Dunkl, jump to higher areas (the Egg Bounce), or hatch sidekick monsters with useful powers. And the game definitely makes the most of Billy's skills—seven worlds with eight missions each make for a host of puzzles and hundreds of eggs.

GMR SRYS → Looks to be the best egg-rolling game ever, and a sharp 3D platformer, too.

HOW HOT ... & & &









PC

PS2

GBA

GC



RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

#### TIGER WOODS PGATOUR 04

CISYSTEM GBA/GC/PC/PS2/XB CIPUSLISHER EA CIDEVELOPER EASPORTS

#### PUT A TIGER IN YOUR TANK

Golf: a man's game. It must be all the references to balls, holes, strokes, etc. But the man as far as professional golf goes is Tiger Woods, and the EA Sports golf game franchise that bears his name is set to keep rolling on every platform with the latest iteration, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004.

What's new this year? In addition to the requisite graphical upgrades land yes, it sure is purty), *Tiger Woods 2004* has seven new courses and more real-life PGA players

(including John Daly and Vijay Singh), along with a robust Create-a-Player system to get your own duffing likeness into the game. The addition of new modes such as Long Drive Shootout and Battle Golf should make for more nontraditional fun, and real-time PGA Tour events will be triggered by your console's internal hardware clock. Fore!

GMR SRYS → Why not just go outside and really play golf? Because we suck at it.

HOW HOT...

#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

#### MONSTER RANCHER 4

DSYSTEM PS2 DRUGLISHER TECMO DECELOPER TECMO

#### COOL NEW RANCH FLAVOR

With years of experience under its belt, Tecmo knows a thing or two about ranching monsters. The company's latest effort, Monster Rancher 4, is the result of vigorous breeding and repeated training (or is that the other way around?), and it looks like it could be the best version yet.

For starters, this monster is more adventurous. After whipping your team of critters into fighting shape in your customized training ground, you can take them off the ranch and into the great wide open for a world-roaming adventure. As you progress through the story, you'll have plenty of opportunities to try out the new battle system, which includes counters, three-on-ones, and tagbattles. As with the previous three installments, you can feed CDs and DVDs to your PS2 and witness the

miracle of monster birth.

GMR SRYS → If it comes together, MR4
may appeal to more than breed-n-battle nuts.

→ HOW HOT...







#### **SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4: SMB 3**

DEVETOR COM DEVELOPER NINTENDO DEVELOPER NINTENDO

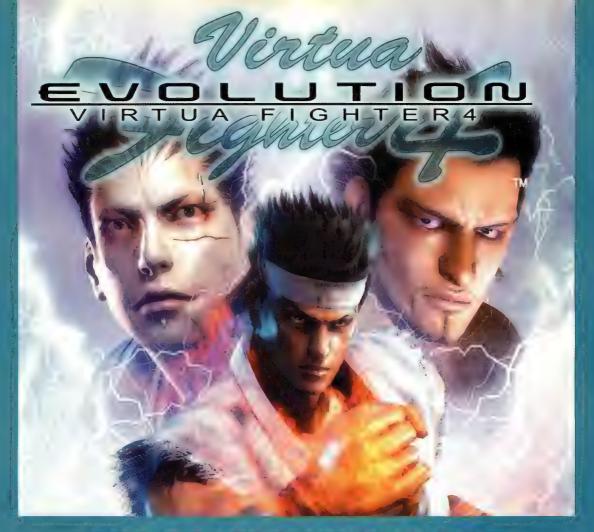
This, friends, is the one we've all been walting for: Super Mario Bros. 3, quite possibly the greatest game ever created. On the GBA, But it's not exactly as you remember it. If you're lucky enough to own an e-Reader, you'll be able to scan in features available in Super Mario Bros. 2 and Super Mario World. After this, though, Nintendo's got plans for an aftnew Mario series.

RELEASE | SEPTEMBER







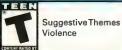


## THE BEATDOWN EVOLVED





PlayStation.2



SEGA

#### RELEASE | AUGUST

#### HOMEWORLD 2

System PC Deubushen VIVENDI UNIVERSAL

#### A SORT OF HOMECOMING

In space, no one can hear you harvest resources. The original Homeworld was hands down 1999's best RTS (yep, even better than Age of Empires 2), primarily due to the extremely high production values that shined through in the well-directed animatics, excellent musical score, and engaging story that gave the game a certain elegance not found in many real-time strategies.

What can fans and newcomers expect from this fall's Homeworld 2? For one, the same level of polish is evident in the demo GMR played. The story continues the epic saga of the Hilgarans and their leader Karan S'jet as they defend the homeworld they were both exiled from and returned to in the first game. With an armada of capital ships bristling with cannons and swift fighters, you'll battle vast fleets of enemy ships equipped with all kinds of nasty tricks.

XB

PC

PS2

**GBA** 

GC

A new graphics engine makes for some unbelievably gorgeous spacescapes that include swirting nebulae, huge dying planets, and glittering star fields. The up-close action on the ships is more detailed, which allows things like turrets on capital ships to have their own animations. This increased detail is important for gameplay, too. Now, you can target specific systems, like engines and docking bays.

Homeworld 2 has all the best aspects of Homeworld, as well as a slightly faster pace and an easier-to-use interface that should settle the few complaints about the first game.

Sounds out of this world to us.

**GMR SAYS** → Excepting *Half-Life 2*, this is our most anticipated PC game of the fall.

→ HOW HOT... 6 6 6 6







#### RELEASE | AUGUST

#### BUFFY: CHAOS BLEEDS

DEVETER GC/PSZ/XB. DPUBLISHER VIVENDI UNIVERSAL. DEGUELOPER EUROCOM

#### WELCOME TO THE SLAYGROUND

Not even cancellation of her TV show can stop Buffy the Vampire Slayer. The popular heroine will once again be staking—please note the delicious pun—a claim to videogame glory with the upcoming multiplatform Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds.

Bleeds serves up a lost episode of sorts, with players taking the role of Buffy as well as some of her closest compatriots in a fight against all manner of undead pests. The third-person 3D adventure boasts six different playable characters, including Buffy, slayer Faith, ventriloquist's dummy Sid, sorceress Willow, vampire Spike, and straight-man Xander.

Developer Eurocom has done a fine job of taking over the reigns from The Collective, developer of the first (Xbox only) *Buffy* title. The fighting engine is smooth, allowing for nifty punch-kick combinations, and Eurocom has improved on the original by creating such offensive moves as spells for Willow and new weapons for the other characters in the form of swords and axes.

An early build boasts such goodies as a brief fight scene in which the player-controlled Buffy stomps ass while an A.I.-fueled Willow provides backup by tossing sun spells at incoming vampires, and a locked-room puzzle involving a midget doll and explosives. Sadly, the game's new multiplayer mode was unavailable for testing, but the mere hint of playing this with pals is impetus enough to tap the vein and enjoy the sanguine results.

GMR SAYS → Suck it down!

-> HOLL HOT A A A







#### SHINING SOUL

SYSTEM GBA DEVOLUCIONES ATLUS SOFTWARE DECUCIONES SEGA

Ever wanted to play a carboony handheid Diablo clone that uses the Shining (as in Shining Force) license to minimal effect? Well then, you're in luck, sailori it just so happens that Atius is publishing Sega's portable dungeom-crawing for GBA, just in time to save our Link cables from extinction. Up to four friends can play together while tethered by cables—just like habos huddled around an oil drum.

RELEASE | SEPTEMBER







→ HOW HOT.



### EXTINCTION IS NOT AN OPTION

It'S A COMFORTABLE SHOOTER
THAT'S EASY TO PICK UP, FEATURES
SHARP GRAPHICS AND PROVIDES
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- Put your huge arsenal of weaponry and vehicles to use, including fighter jets, tanks, buggies, landing craft and more
- BATTLE ACROSS SPACE, THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE AND DIRECTLY ON EARTH WITH A SEAMLESS TERRAIN-TO-ORBIT TRANSITION IN 18 NERVE WRECKING MISSIONS

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POWERED BY







#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

## 1080° AVALANCHE

apid Ballin

Dayarem GC Developes NINTENDO DEVELOPES NST

#### REFORE THERE WAS SSX

As longtime Nintendo fans may remember, the original N64 snowboarding game ruled the genre back in '98, back before extreme-sports games became a \$500 trillion (by our pseudoscientific approximation) industry. Finally, Nintendo is putting the finishing touches on the GameCube sequel. (A five-year wait for a new game in a beloved series? Ho-ho, that's Nintendo all right!)

So, will it be worth the wait? Recent hands-on playtime left us optimistic. One to four players can explore multiple paths down Avalanche's different courses, some that open up only after you trigger rock slides, cave-ins, collapsing bridges, or (of course) avalanches. If you need to outrun these natural disasters, you can tuck in on the

XB

PS2

GBA GC straightaways (make sure to enjoy the nice blurring speed-effects!) As usual, button and stick combos produce grabs, fakies, and other hotdog maneuvers, while spinning is currently assigned to a single button-the R trigger. That's right, simply hold it down and watch yourself whirl. Whether this proves to be a welcome simplification of the sport or a heavy-handed dumbing down of the controls, however, remains to be seen. On the other hand, landing safely after catching big air is now a little bit more complicated-you'll have to spin the analog stick to regain your balance, or you'll risk bailing.

GMR SAYS → So far so good, but will it have

HOW HOT ... 6 6



#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

## DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE

DISYSTEM GBA/GC/PS2/XB DEVELOPER ACTIVISION DISEURLEPER DISNEY INTERACTIVE

#### BOARD TO INFINITY—AND BEYOND!

In all fairness, Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure contains all the extremity of, say, a box of animal crackers. Thank sweet heaven someone decided that if this game was going to be made, it should at least be built on the wonderful Tony Hawk engine.

Disney icons Buzz Lightyear. Woody, Simba, Pumba, and Timon (among others) plow through such

themed stages as Andy's room and the elephant's graveyard, perform tricks, collect points and goodies, and unlock secret stuff of all sorts. Built for kids, this one looks so good and plays so well, it may prove to be an adventure savored by all ages. 14

GMR SAYS → It's Tony Hawk's world, we just want to skate all over it.

HOW HOT ...







#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

## NHL 2004

DISVISTERII GC/PSZXB DIPUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS DIDEVELOPER EA SPORTS

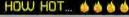
#### HOME-ICE ADVANTAGE: ONLINE

We recently received a rough build of NHL 2004 and found that the game is already showing signs of continuing the EA dynasty. First and foremost, PS2 (only) online play is now possible via the Network Adaptor, and though we can't confirm whether this will be in the final version, there are icons for a 10-player game on a single system.

Other treats include more than 80 NHL and international teams, new animations, freestyle deking, ice sprays, authentic color commentary, and-proving that EA takes its game reviews seriously-a Tutorial mode. The button-mashing fighting system of the past has been replaced with

more accurate brawling that includes wild haymakers and the ever-popular jersey grabbing. Check this space for an updated preview soon. If

GMR SAYS → EA updated its fighting





#### **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA**

DEVISION PS2/XB DEVISION VIVENDI UNIVERSAL DEPUELOPER WARTHOG

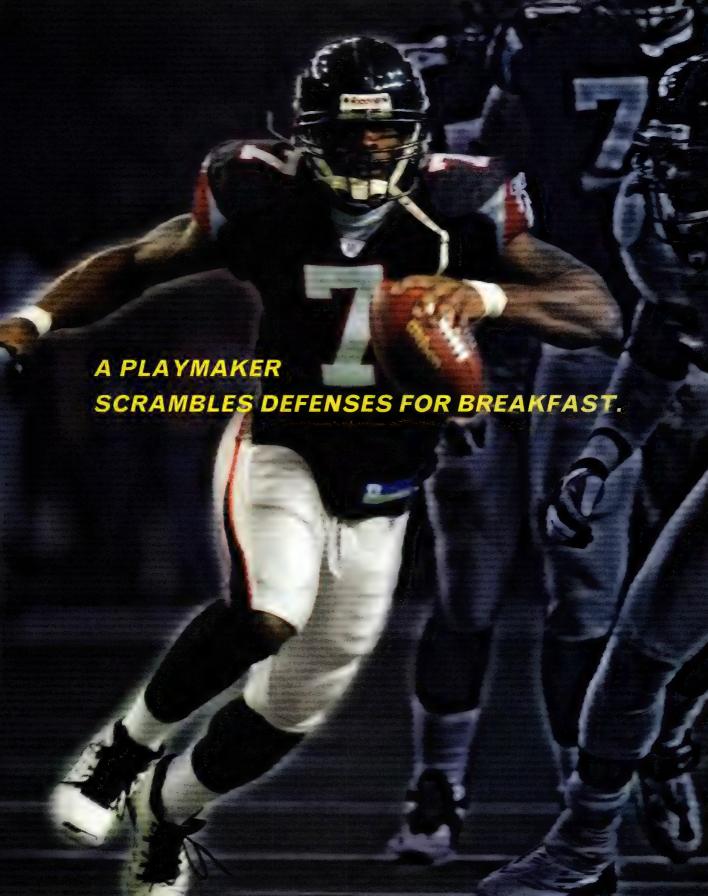
Strap on the space boots of one William Adama, a neophyte pilot on the Battlestar Galactica, and get ready for deep-space dogfightin'. Adama, you say? This prequel is set 40 years before the TV series, which means it's your job to blast the Cylons, keep the Galactica in one piece, and get Adama promoted. Expect plentu of fan service and hope that Warthog can keep this more homage than ham fisted.

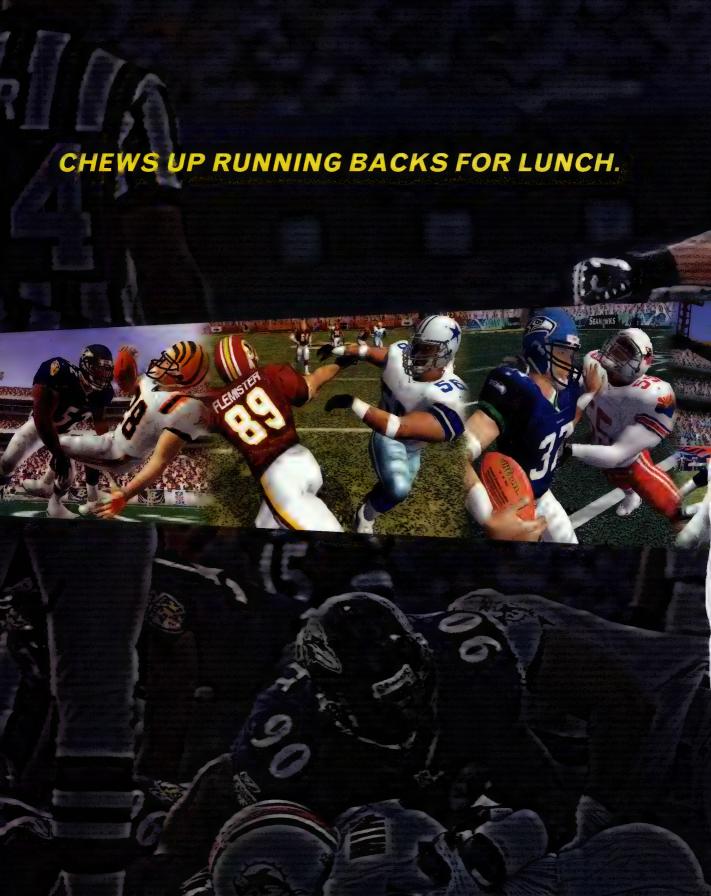
RELEASE | AUGUST













## AND FOR DESSERT, SMOKED SAFETY.



#### **NEW PLAYMAKER CONTROL**

What makes a playmaker? Absolute, field-wide control. Now you can direct off-the-ball teammates and turn a busted play into six points.

#### **ENHANCED ONLINE PLAY\***

Compete in EA-sponsored Online Tournaments and chatin-game with EA SPORTSTM Talk. Plus, new "fair play" settings create an even playing field for everyone.

#### NEW OWNER MODE

Here's your key to the Owner's Box. Hire a staff, set ticket and concession prices, build a stadium, add luxury boxes, and anything else you want to generate team revenue and fan loyalty.









GAME BOY NOVANCE

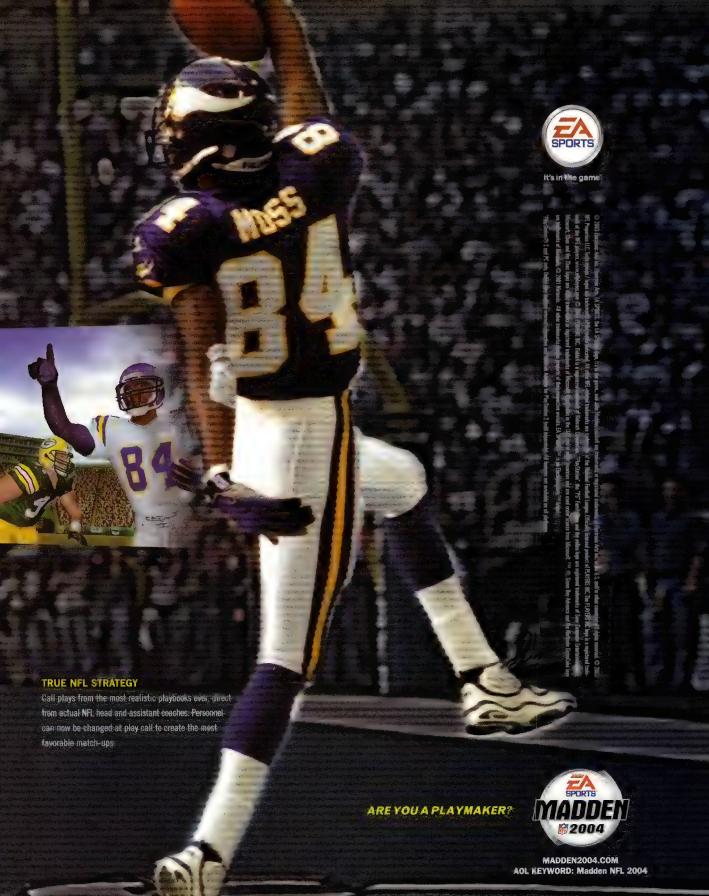
PlayStation 2













#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

## NGLIF NPS

OSYSTEM GC/PS2/XB OPUBLISHER KEMCC

#### SAM FISHER'S LOST LOVE?

Metal Gear Solid and Splinter Cell. There, now that we have that out of the way, let's take a look at Kemco's new action-stealth game. Roque Ops, appearing on multiple platforms in October. In the not-toodistant future, ex-Green Beret Nikki Conners lurks silently in the darkness, ready to crack a neck at a moment's notice.

XB

PC

PS2

GC

All the usual genre staples appear in one form or another: using shadows to avoid detection, hiding bodies to avoid detection. using bloodless kills to avoid detection, and employing cool high-tech gadgets...to help you avoid detection. Roque Ops features some fairly crafty level design that presents multiple objectives with

multiple ways of completing them. There are some situations where going balls-to-the-wall with gunfire isn't going to work-partly because your character is a girl, but mostly because you don't want to draw too much attention to yourself. You don't want to see those guards hunting you down with level-three tenacityit's not very pretty.

It looks as if Rogue Ops is contributing some new ideas to the stealth subgenre, and new is always a good thing. Hopefully, this one won't sneak by without anybody noticing.

GMR SAYS → Looks good so far, but lose the generic title

HOW HOT

### ΔΙ ΙΔς

DISYSTEM PC/PS2/XB DPUBLISHER ACCLAIM DEBUGLOPER ACCLAIM CHELTENHAM

#### ACCLAIM GARNERS JEN. MILLIONS MAKE MERRY

Acclaim could release a box containing a slip of paper with the words "Sorry, sucker!" in it, and it would sell like glazed doughnuts at a Weight Watchers meeting if it had a picture of Alias star Jennifer Garner on its cover. Come fall, game fans will have their box with Garner's stunning visage on it, and, as an added bonus, it will come with an intriguing third-person adventure and swanky instruction manual.

Alias captures the look and feel of the hit ABC TV show, with players battling the forces of insensate evil as spunky CIA agent Sydney Bristow. The game will feature a brand-new story with an as-yet-unrevealed plot penned by the show's writers. The developer promises that criminal group SD-6 and its villainous head Arvin Sloane will feature prominently in Sidney's interactive adventure, but no other details have yet been released.

At May's E3, Alias emerged as Acclaim's most intriguing title. Emphasizing stealth as part of its play, Alias lets Bristow dress up in different costumes (impersonating a dance hall floozy and a doctor, for example) to infiltrate secure areas and fool various guards. Bristow will be aided in-game by her handler and love interest, Vaughn, and she will have access to high-tech goodies such as DNA samplers, night-vision goggles, and EMP guns.

Animations in the E3 demo seemed unusually awkward (Ms. Bristow's movements, for example, are more than a little on the stiff side), yet everything else here seemed fine. Alias even showed small flashes of inspiration. such as when the screen splits dramatically to show Sidney entering a dangerous situation or encountering an impending threat. Alias is hotter than a clambake on Mercury, so if Acclaim doesn't come through, it must forever agree to take the following alias: mud. 14

GMR SAYS → Alias: Tomb Raider? Lord, we hope not.



















DSYSTEM PC A DAUBLISHER ATARI . DIEUELOPER PIRANHA BYTES

In the massive world that is Gothic II, peasants work, beasts haunt the woods, and you decide whose ass is going to get kicked. Pick a profession (goody-goody paladin, magic-slinging wizard, or ruthless mercenary) and watch your popularity soar...or wane. With a variety of places to go and plenty of random events to encounter, this RPG/action/adventure hubrid could be a huge time killer.

RELEASE L OCTOBER







## » NEXT

#### RELEASE | OCTOBER

## KILL.SWITCH

System PS2/XB CIPUBLISHER NAMCO CIDEVELOPER NAMCO HOMETEK

#### GIMME SHELTER

As anyone who's ever been shot at can tell you, having a large, solid obstruction between you and the bullet helps with the whole self-preservation thing. Such is the basis of Namco's kill.switch, an action-shooter that relies less on the one-man-army-with-guns-a-blazin' cliché and more on the intelligent use of your environments as protective cover—because that's the only way you're going to survive.

Holding down the left trigger initiates the Cover mode. In this mode, you can poke your head up and shoot with lethal precision. If you just need to take some heat off, you can use a less-accurate blindfire maneuver, which sends hostile targets back into their cover positions. Almost everything in the environment can be used as cover: walls, furniture, support

columns, rusted-out cars, stacks of rubber tires...and they all provide different degrees of protection. But spend too much time hiding from your troubles, and your troubles will come looking for you. Weapons include assorted flavors of machine gun. and grenades in the flash and limb-removing varieties. Flash grenades will temporarily render enemies blind and deaf (and you, too, if you don't throw them far enough), and the explosive grenades...well, everybody knows what those are capable of.

Namco promises an intriguing story (start thinking about the meaning of the title if you want a head start) that spans 16 levels of hide-and-go-kill action.

GMR SRYS → One could say Namco's got you covered, but we won't. That's lame.

→ HOW HOT. A A







#### RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

## FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Osystem GC/PC/PS2/XB CONDISHER E

## OR WOULD THAT BE

Squad-based shooters sound like a great idea because you imagine yourself sitting back sipping piña coladas while your teammates do all the dirty work. But in practice, the often-complex process of giving orders to your troops can severely cut into your drinking time. Enter Freedom Fighters, a fast-paced third-person shooting game from the maker of the Hitman series, in which commanding soldiers takes only a few quick button presses.

In an alternate world, the Soviet Union has invaded the United States and you-NYC inhabitant and plumber Chris Stone-must recruit other rebellious New Yorkers to take up arms. You'll begin Freedom Fighters with enough charisma to convince one fellow civilian to join your cause, but as you retake military bases, you'll eventually be able to lead up to 12 fighters at once. You order troops individually or as a group to follow you, scout out an area, or defend a designated location. Giving commands takes only a second, so you can make your guerrillas flank an enemy without having to pause from the action.

You have the right to bear an array of guns, grenades, Molotov cocktails, and gun turrets, as well as the freedom to select missions in any order. Is a well-stocked enemy base giving you a hard time? Take out the gas station and you'll find it leaner and considerably easier when you visit again. Next stop, Liberty Island.

**GMR SRYS** → Where Hitman 2 was exacting and slow. Freedom Fighters is fast and explosive.

→ HOW HOT...









#### SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BBB

DISYSTEM PS2/XB DEUBLISHER THO DEUBLOPER HEAVY IRON

Kids from kindengarten to college, rejoice—there's an allnew adventure staming your favorite unflagpable seardweller. Battle far Bikini Battom finds players guiding SpongeBob, Sandy Cheeks, and Patrick the Stamfish across eight worlds. Minigemes include Bubble Stomping, Tongue Boarding, and Underweam Bungle. Jumping Cast volceovers and an officeat sense of humor should make this a fitting gift for the deserving child-or stoner—in your life.

RELEASE | OCTOBER







HOLL HOT

XB

PS2

GC







#### RELEASE | NOVEMBER

## JAMES BOND 007: EON

Disystem GBA/GC/PS2/XB Tipublisher EA Tideveloper i

#### SHAKEN, IN THIRD, PERSON, THAT IS

Who'd have thought that James Bond's games could become predictably better than his movies? With NightFire, Electronic Arts proved that 007 characters could shine even when a game wasn't based on a Bond film. With Everything or Nothing, EA's going further, bringing in 007 scribe Bruce Fierstein for movie-quality scenarios, body-scanning and voice-capturing Pierce Brosnan, plus hiring actress Shannon Elizabeth to play Bond's new girl, Serena St. Germaine.

The only potential hitch: gameplay. EA's swapping tried-and-true first-person 007 shooting for third-person action. Moreover, tricky-to-implement hand-to-hand combat has been added to Bond's standard guns and gadgets,

while stealth, disguise, and rappelling now become necessary over 20 levels. GameCubing Q-wannabes can use GBAs to control gadgets. Also new are two-player cooperative missions—even Shannon will likely join the action.

Changes aside, EON is a fairly surefire hit. Numerous proven elements appear, including international locales from Peru to Russia, classic Bond enemies (think Jaws), vehicle scenes (think cars, helicopters, motorcycles, and tanks), and four-player play (think getting shot repeatedly by a Walther PPK). ■

**GMR SRYS**  $\rightarrow$  With stakes this high, we're betting big on Bond's latest adventure.









#### RELEASE | NOVEMBER

PS2

GBA





## MARIO & LUIGI

DBYSTEM GBA A DRUBLISHER NINTENDO. DDEUGLOPER ALPHA SYSTEMS

#### KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Surprisingly, Paper Mario was one of the RPG-starved N64's most underappreciated games. Whether that was due to it being released late in the console's life cycle or its charming elementary-school aesthetic or just the fact that Square (developer of the original Super Mario RPG) wasn't involved...it doesn't really matter. Lots of people missed out on a great game. Nintendo is rewarding those of us with good taste with a brand-new RPG, one especially tailored for Paper Mario fans.

When we last saw Luigi, he was sulking in his "secret" basement hideout, jealous of his brother's abundant adventure opportunities. But now the call has been made: Mario needs help. You control both characters [unfortunately, it's only a one-player game]: Mario with the A button, Luigi with the B button. In the overworld, Mario and Luigi jump onto platforms or underneath bonus blocks; during battle, each sibling can launch an individual attack like Jump or Hammer, or they can team up for a combo move. As in *Paper Mario*, timing your button presses plays a crucial role in determining damage. As you can probably tell, we really enjoyed *Paper Mario*-hopefully *Mario & Luigi* stays true to that great game's spirit. ▶

GMR SRYS → Not every RPG need be an FMV-laden quest of epic proportions, you know.

→ HOW HOT...



#### **WALLACE & GROMIT IN PROJECT ZOO**

DISYSTEM GC/PS2/XB DEUBLISHER BAMI - CIDEUELOPER BAMIL - -

Feathers McGraw (penguin, chicken impersonator, criminal mastermind) has taken over the zoo, and it's up to Wallace and Gromit to sneak in—via Trojan penguin—to foil his plans in this gadget-filled platformer. True to the award-winning claymation roles, toyal Gromit braves Feathers' henchmen, while Wallace builds dubiously helpful contraptions, such as the pornidge gun, gyrocopter, and springy boots.

RELEASE | OCTOBER

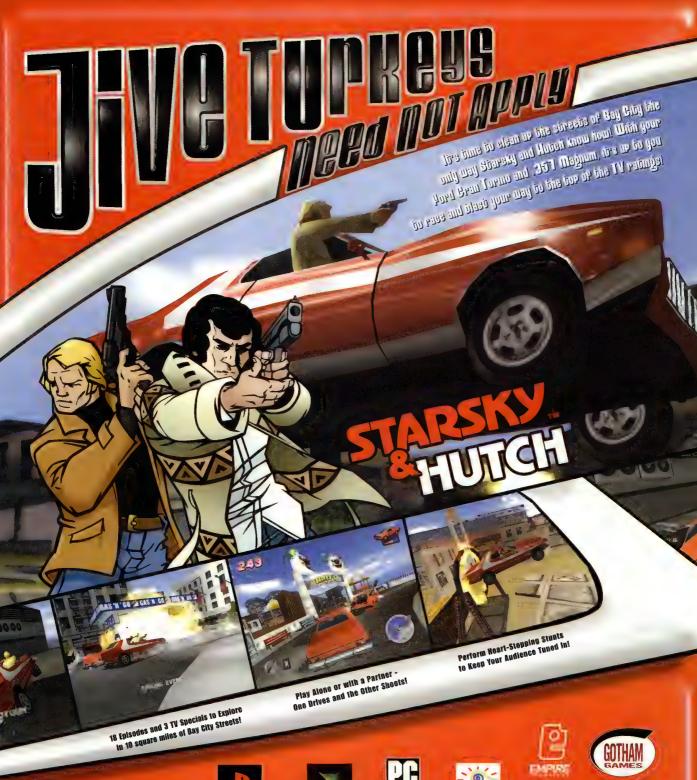






→ HOW HOT...

6



PlayStation<sub>®</sub>2



















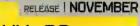


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RATCHET & CLANK: GC

DISYSTEM PS2 Developer SONY DOEUELOPER LUCASARTS READY FOR THE LIMELIGHT?

The original Ratchet & Clank may not have turned the world on its rabbity-alien ear, but

Insomniac's planned a few tricks tricks that should please fans and bring even a few more into the fold.

Having saved one galaxy, furry Ratchet and his li'l tin buddy have become commandos for MegaCorp. In a recent demo build, Ratchet, sent to curtail the activities of the evil Thugs-4-Less mercenaries with the business end of his wrench, busts lots of robo-reptile skull, participates in a televised Arena fight, and destroys a jamming planetoid.

The planetoid showcases Insomniac's new "spherical world" technology, allowing the duo to bound about in tiny, open-ended globes of fun. So far, these cartoon-inspired

worlds don't seem to offer much in the way of new gameplay, but the presentation is novel nonetheless.

What else is new? Ratchet now upgrades his health and weapons by fighting, allowing you to customize his massive arsenal to your liking. And, of course, the graphics are even better, sporting larger environments. more Disney-quality animation, and legions of enemies. If the slowdown disappears, it'll be perfect.

Due in November, Going Commando already tops the first game's stellar production values and improves upon overall play experience. Will it prove a bigger hit? Only time will tell. 14

GMR SAYS → Will Ratchet & Clank again play second fiddle to Naughty Dog's Jak and Daxter's

10W HOT...





RELEASE | NOVEMBER

### METAL ARMS

DISYSTEM GC/PS2/XB DIPUBLISHER VIVENDI UNIVERSAL DIEUELDPER SWINGIN APE

#### MY FIRST HALO

PS2

GC

As evidenced by the success of Insomniac's Ratchet & Clank, cute-as-a-button characters and gratuitous gunplay go together guite nicely, thank you very much. With an emphasis on explosive action, Metal Arms: A Glitch in the System, Vivendi Universal's forthcoming run-n-jump-n-shootem-up, has its sights set squarely on similarly irreverent territory.

A third-person shooter, Metal Arms features just enough story to talk its audience into devastating foes (and their surroundings) with extreme prejudice. General Corrosive has enslaved the Droids, the working class on the planet Iron Star. This is a robots-only sort of place, so don't expect too much by way of flora and fauna. As the heroic, half-ton Glitch, players run-n-gun through more than 50 missions spanning six environments. Developer Swingin

Ape has sensibly recycled some of the best aspects of some of the best games in recent memory. Looking and moving around feels akin to controlling your movements in Halo (so then, no complaints there), while Glitch's considerable array of weapons and gadgets are accessible at the click of the trigger, onscreen and on the fly, à la Metal Gear Solid.

Cute and competent, Metal Arms is on track to be an entertaining, if not exactly inspired shooter. The controls and animation are already finely tuned, and the developers have clearly gone to great pains to provide plenty of explosive material, Will there be enough variety to keep our trigger fingers suitably satiated? We're happy to wait and see... !

GMR SAYS → You know, for kids.

нош нот...



## MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

DSYSTEM GC/PS2/XBOX DPUBLISHER EA DOEUELOPER EA

There may be too many WWII games out there, but none quite like Medal of Honor. The superb first-person-shooter series is returning for duty, but this time, on the other side of the world. Get ready for some intense jungle action as you fight your way from Pearl Harbor (a set piece to rival even Allied Assault's D-Day scene) to the sandy, blood-stained beaches of Iwo Jima.

RELEASE I NOVEMBER







RELEASE | NOVEMBER







### **ALNIN-I**

DSYSTEM GC/PS2 DPUBLISHER NAMCO CDEVELOPER ARGONAUT

#### I-NINJA, THEREFORE I AM

The grizzled gaming veterans among you (don't worry, we practice a don't-ask, don't-tell policy here at GMR) will recall Argonaut as a top-flight Super NES developer that used the Super FX chip of its own co-design to explore the new frontier of three-dimensional graphics in such classics as Stunt Race FX and Star Fox. Alas, Argonaut's most recent project, the much-hyped Malice, is trapped in Development Hell and struggling to escape, leaving I-Ninja as the developer's only current console project: a cute, irreverent PS2 platformer that rips meaty gameplay chunks from many other genres.

Of the four levels in our brisk playable demo, only two feature mostly traditional platform-game mechanics, as I-Ninia jumps. climbs, and slashes his foes. But they also

include rail-grinds and half-pipes, which the game shows you how to use in nifty realtime demos called up by hitting the SELECT button. Another level has you steering a giant eyeball (!) down a treacherous tunnel, plowing right into bowling-pin formations of enemy ninjas. Yet another has you engaging in a first-person giant-robot boxing match. It's a schizophrenic style that comes off as a clever amalgam, thanks in no small part to the consistent visual style and kickin' drumand-bass soundtrack. Still not sold? Ex Disney men Don Bluth and Gary Goldman (Dragon's Lair, The Secret of N.I.M.H.) have recently signed on for CG duty. 14

GMR SAYS → A smooth engine, solid gameplay, and goofy humor may well make for quite the sleeper hit

HOW HOT ...



#### RELEASE | NOVEMBER

### MΔFIΔ

CISYSTEM PS2/XB CIPUBLISHER GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS CIDEVELOPER ILLUSION SOFTWORKS

#### UNMADE MEN NEED NOT APPLY

Released last year for the PC, Mafia is a riveting 1930s-themed combination of Max Payne and Grand Theft Auto (a combo also seen in Sony's The Getaway), and one of 2002's most glowingly reviewed titles. Now, Mafia is taking the dangerous road from PC to console and introducing the rest of the gaming world to Tommy Angelo, a cab driver who unwittingly becomes embroiled in a war between rival families for control of the City of Lost Heaven, Each of Mafia's 20 levels is teeming with brilliant and intense Medal of Honor-esque set pieces, in which Tommy and his mo-capped enemies blast each other with machine guns and hack at each other with knives.

Unlike all too many ill-advised conversions that dumb down the original

gameplay for consoles, Mafia's developers are only making changes for the better. For example, while the PC version's cars handle like school buses—an intentional decision to reflect the primitive state of 1930s automotive "technology"—the console versions' vehicles are closer to Vice City in speed and performance, placing fun over realism. Best of all, Mafia's killer PC graphics are being brought to consoles with virtually no loss of detail; all the PC version's touches, such as bullet-gored vintage cars after nasty firefights, are making the journey intact. 14

GMA SAYS → Mafia was one of the highest-rated PC games of 2002, and the PS2/Xbox conversions are on track to make this an offer console gamers can't refuse









#### CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EQ

U SYSTEM PSZ DEUBLISHER SOE DEUBLIGGER SNOWBLIND STUDIOS

For a feel for what this EverQuest adventure is about, take the sweet addictiveness of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance and then crank up the heat and intensity, à la Diablo II. A dragon's lair of features awaits you; randomized dungeons, 5,000-plus items to find. branching skill trees for each of five character classes, and, most important, online multiplayer support for four-and just in time for Christmas!

RELEASE | NOVEMBER







→ HOW HOT... • • •

PS2





What the hell did teenagers do before fighting games? For the past 20 years, America's youth has been taking out its myriad aggressions on one another behind molded plastic controls. Adolescent spaks have been swiftly solved or grossly exacerbated in front of the television or in dank shopping-mall areades by going a few dozen heated rounds with these competitive catalysts. These games have helped shape a \$20 billion industry, formed friendships and clubs between players all over the planet, and even created careers for the truly hardcore addicts. But like most modern cultural phenomena, fighting games and the businesses they be fostered have humble beginnings...in the '70s.

Head-to-head competition has been an integral part of gaming since the birth of arcade games. Atari built 1972 videogame pioneer Pong for a pair of human paddle jockeys, 1974's Tank featured twin sticks for each of the two combatants, and Midway

Gunfight over from Japan in 1975. During this period, folks were no strangers to competitive coinops, but they had never come to fisticuffs-the technology just wasn't slick enough to handle the demanding graphics and animation of a proper punch-and-kick fighter.

#### THE KARATE KID

The budding arcade scene didn't see a true brawler until 1984, when inconspicuous Japanese developer Technos (the brains behind seminal side-scroller Double Dragon) created a kumitestyle sparring game called Karate Champ. Publisher Data East-whose positive contributions to gaming (Burger Time) were later nullified by its crimes against humanity (Caveman Games, Fighter's History)—distributed the arcade fighter in America. It also brought a watered-down version to Nintendo's 8-bit NES, which had settled into nearly 20 million homes by the end of the decade and neleed make arcade ports like Karate Champ a

Just about all that gamers got with Karate Champ were fighters in rudimentary karate dress performing simple punch-and-kick actions. Barely a year after its release, competitor Konami took the two-player-simultaneous model several leaps further with Yie Ar Kung-Fu. Despite its marketing nightmare of a name. Yie Ar turned heads in America with several new innovations: It introduced projectiles and special attacks, established the tournament-style pacing that permeates the genre today, and gave enemies individual personalities through unique weapons and fighting styles. The only drawnack: Unfortunate human contenders had to play as the same weak, nondescript fighter throughout the game. Yie Ar represented great advances in programming for its time, but it wasn't long before gamers wanted to perform the same kinds of cool attacks their opponents has

If the chubby, fireball-tossing guy from Yie Ar Kung-Fu knew how he'd influence the

## **FEATURE**

#### MOONLIGHTING

-> What major franchise genre experimentation?



SAMURAI SHODOWN RPG A decent spin-off that follows Shodown 1 and 2 through the eyes of one of six Sam Sho characters.



SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II A smart, addictive puzzle game with Street Fighter characters keeping a low Rating: FIERCE



VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS Virtua Fighter 2's cast with digantic heads and novelty tracking down a Sega Saturn Rating: JAB



FIGHTER'S CLASH card-based title starring the fighter stock. It arrived on the Short-lived Neo Geo Pocket Rating: FIERCE



Programmers of tomorrow back in 85 only a couple of years for veteran arcade and It is developed from a promotion or market. Building on the groundwork laid GARAGE TO THE STATE OF THE STAT assistances Seed Fighter SARKERS OF THE applications of the

FIGHTING IN THE STREET

🦟 a kostik senergi en time konga combinen I amount Street Figures into a pile. Altere for being these more Land Control of the C

Street Fighter, Capcom took a few years backbone its OPS mainboard (updated

If the chubby, fireball-tossing guu from Yie Ar Kung Fu knew how he'd influence the programmers of tomorrow back in '85, he probablu would have secured some kind of roualty rights...

up the fighting arena, literally, with huge "levels some up to three tiers large."

Street Fighter game to date) allowed the makes of the company lagging controls, choppy animation, tinny Committee of Street, and Street, or other Designation of Stree Improved to the Law Inches the second chipset was uswelled for Street Fighter II

Resolutions in a party of audio and se taux digitized viceous and level saddlers, addition through the terms



Street Fighter is









apanese version a







Although the graphics and sophistication have certainly evolved, fighting games.



fighting-game series on the market. It's

offshouss (Super Pozzle Fighter II Turbe)

Sunfferinger:

p = 10 11 - 11 to - 1 to - 2 To 1

Low-profile innovator SNK dished out a

few gems (Fatal Fury, Last Blade, King of Fighters and the sexy Samurai Shodown

during the '90s (see the SNK breakdown

op arena. That game was Mortal Kombat.

page for details). Burgeoning British

combo-driven number called Killer Instinct. But Street Fighter's biggest competitor at the arcades of the early 190s was a new title from Midway, a company that had spent the prior decade

seen a hacked aroade version with

Rainbow Edition), a pseudo-3D

and we love it for that, Guilty



And Mortal Kombat, despite its fighter with a few neat tricks. It left 🗐

#### FRIENDLY KOMPETITION

Mortal Kombat featured digitized motioncaptured actors rather than hand-drawn action...but that's not why people liked it, Easter eggs that could be found through a combination of took and skill, but that's not why people played it. Mortal 49.40 A PART OF THE PART 

#### MATINEE FODDER



Fighter competed for throughout the '90s. But who movie deal?

FRANCHISE: MORTAL KOMBAT MOVIES: MORTAL KOMBAT, MORTAL KOMBAT ANNIHILATION, MORTAL KOMBAT: CONQUEST (TV

HJGHLIGHT: Sub-Zero totally

LOW POINTS: Classy scene running from stock explosion footage in MK: Annihilation pivotal character Sonia not the same broad from the

MOVIES: STREET FIGHTER llive action); assorted STREET FIGHTER II and STREET FIGHTER ALPHA HIGHLIGHT: Animated Street

fun, and not just because of

LOW POINTS: Van Damme as

WINNER: Street Fighter "Finish him!" Or something.



babalities, and in the pinnacle of Western retardation, friendships.

← The Darkstalker series offers goofy, fast fighting fun, while Fighters Megamix lets you kick various Fighting Vipers and Virtua Fighters around





#### -DUR ZAXIS IS SHOWING

With technology improving, some videogame developers used powerful new graphics engines to deliver more-realistic games across all genres.

Japanese developer/publisher Sega, at the hand of visionary Yu Suzuki.

Afterburner. Shenmuel and his AM2 team, introduced a racing title in 1992 that used three-dimensional polygons to denict in game objects, rather than the two-dimensional sprites that made up most games. Virtua Racing, in turn, provided the foundation for what would become the first full—3D fighting game. Virtua Fighter

A some time of the last of the first of the



#### WHAT IS COSPLAY?



An interesting, and sometimes tragic, side-effect of videogames lighting games in particular), is the phenomenon known as "cooplay." The Japanese oastardization of the words "costume play" has come to signify all that is strange in the world. Young lolks, just like yourself, dress up in outfits designed to mimic their lavorite fighting-game characters, which usually results in a sea of low-budget Chun Lis harmming for the camera. But, every once in a while you get a loxy 1-no lof Guilty Gear X2 famel, and that makes us tingle on the inside. The whistles go W00!

room for the player to think up custom combos and evermore embarrassing demises for his competition. Characters were faster slightly smaller onscreen lymith left that the property of the property of the property of the premium on a property of the premium of the premiu

Most *Mortal Kombat* fans consider *MK2* the franchise's high point. The third rendition went over the top with wacky finishing sequences (animalities were particularly shameless), while a plethora of regular and cyborg ninjas with colorswapped outfits watered down an already bulky cast. *MK4* took the series in a whole new direction that pared down fans even further but reflected the latest trend in fighting games: the

## FEATURE

#### un intuitive pick up and play control scheme has helped the Takken series reel in casual gamers to this day.

Namco created Tekken in 1994. An intuitive pick-up and play control scheme has beloed the Tekken series any college frat bouse or dorm and

Tekken is still one of the most 1 (44) 31 (31) Adam Sega released the ill-fated Breamcasi in America, Launched shorthy after the release of Sega's hardware. **Sour** Catibur is actually a tollow-up to a lesser-known arcade and PlayStation fighter called Sout Blade Because PlayStation-based System \$2 herdware port of the hardcore coin-op sequel to

fighting gamers unaware of its charms.

Any fighting gamer would likely like Soul Calibur, but not all of them would want to play it. The gameplay The second of th The state of the s nowever, the old-school fighting games titles with cult followings (Capcom vs. SNK, Guilty Gear X2) keep the 2D genre has carved out a crystal-clear path for future fighters. IC









ighter is a footnote in the history of fighting games.





#### FIFTEEN CANDLES

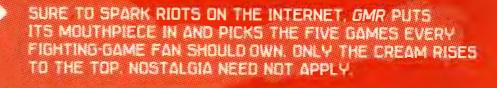


Did you know that it's anniversary? That's right. We've been playing Street you're a Capcom fan, an SMK all. Before the advent of Street Fighter II, the notion of half-circle motions, fireballs, and hurricane kicks didn't exist. One of the few games that can, to this day, still stand as an innovator, Street "Happy Birthday." A hundred wannabes have come and gane, but none has ever series. Here's lookin' at ya











Deyond its day.

Political Control of the Control of



## D. SOUL CALIBUR II (PS2/GC/KB/NYCESCH) While hardcore degrees; whenve been

its nighty polished follow-up, Soul Calibur II, which is any cheap ring outs, added wall attacks, and the return of



#### I BAMERA SHEDOWN II in the convented

Unless your local bowling alley still has an SNK MVS system (the kind with three or four games in one cabinet) installed, chances are you

Which is a damn shame, because this game is not only the epitome of the series, it's one of the most focused, hard-hitting fighting games around that has stood the test of time. For a game that came out in 1994, it's amazing how

work to the first tight. Charly Damp ACC and Act and if it is reached it were

Unique weapons for each character (borrowed from Soule

No. 1

Same and a result of the same states are graphics, smooth animation, and a result of characters strong (Gen-An and Characters) are presented the frame star of SS2 is the razorsharp garberian. Sattle, so, was rever ported to a console tapable of dening it justice to PlayStation port was crapped outs but several a soot Satura version), except for the Neobel States which all of the people away. Two sequets, Samural processor it and Saracra shootwardy. Amalusa's Revenge were released for soot satural and PlayStation in Japan.



#### 🐧 📻 | VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION (PS2/2003)

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3 Street Fighter Worfers wonderfully classic Ryu values extractions are deen unusually of Class 12 Supreme Street Ryu values of the Street Parking unusually of Class 12 Supreme Street Ryu values of the Street Ryu values o

# No. 1 STREET FIGHTER III: THIRD STRIKE INFERTIZEDOR

Resident Evil saved Capcom's ass. It's no secret that the company was once on the brink of bankruptcy because it flooded shelves with more Street Fighter II sequels than the market could bear. Factor in the substantial cost of cartridge manufacturing and a lack of innovation between sequels (which would often come months apartl, and it's a wonder the series survived at all. But thanks to some survival-horror games and a rejuvenation of the Street Fighter brand via the Alpha series, Capcom got back on its feet, enabling the company to finally ditch the trusty CPS-II hardware and move on to CPS-III territory. While the first CPS-III

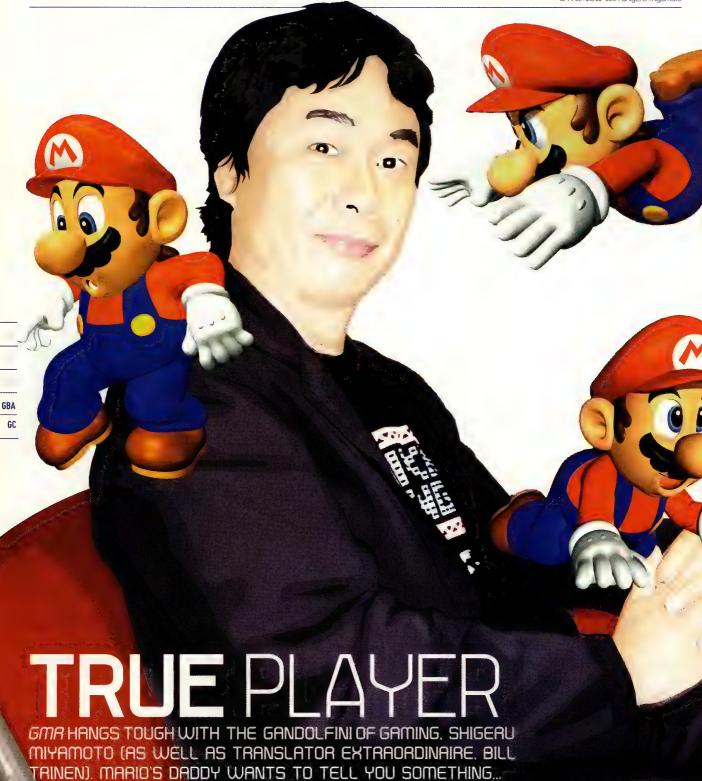
game, Warzard Red Earth in North America) was never ported to a nome console, it was Street Fighter III that made gamers tremble. The game is a powerhouse of 2D graphics, with fluid Disney-esque levels of animation and gorgeous anime-cet character art.

Unfortunately, the game in all of its iterations as Street Fighter III. Street Fighter III. Double Impact, and Street Fighter III. Double Impact, and Street Fighter III. Strike, never quite captured the gaming zeitgeist as Street Fighter II did when it first appeared. You can thank the new wave of 3D fighters, like Tekken, for stealing SF3's thunder. By that time, it was clear the kids had moved on.

Still: that doesn't stop. (Inird Strike from rocking like no one's business. The culmination of over 10 years worth of experience timessing the Street Fighter III street Fighter Alpha, and Darkstalker series was poured into Phird Strike, which added earnes and a whole host of fine-tuned gameplay enhancements. It may feel slow when compared to Capcom 21, and it may not have the supershare character art of the Sulfiy Cear games, but Third Strike remains to this day the gronous peak of fighting games, tilled to the gills with pure 2D science. When challenged to a duel, this is our weapon of choice.



IDOL CHATTER an interview with Shigeru Miyamoto



an interview with Shigeru Miyamoto



MAGICAL MIYAMOTO MOMENTS Hindsight is 20/20...



Legend of Zelda Release: 1986 In a nutshell: Kick-started one of garning's biggest franchises, mixing open words of RPGs with more accessible action combat. GMR Rates it: 7/10



Super Mario Kart Release: 1993 In a nutshell: Kart racers are commonplace now, but this was the 0.6. Some say its tight control is still unsurpassed. GMR Rates it: 9/10



Super Mario 64 Release: 1996 In a nutshell: It's the first true 3D platformer. Remarkably, it still stands up well to modern efforts, thanks to sublime controls. GMR Rates it: 8/10

cMR: Regarding Nintendo's emphasis on connectivity over online play, it's easier for schoolkids to meet up and hang around and play Pac-Man than it is for thirty-somethings (your original audience) who grew up on games like Donkey Kong and Mario Bros. Doesn't this put a ceiling on your potential success?

SM: I don't really think we're necessarily limiting [our audience). There are many different styles of gameplay that we can do with connectivity, and these are some of the ideas that we're showing. But Nintendo has had some smash hits with games like Smash Bros., Mario Kart, and GoldenEye. Generally, a multiplayer game that sells a million copies is considered a pretty big success. And though those games are focused on the multiplayer aspect, they've still gone on to be big successes and many people play them. Much in the same way, we're looking at this idea of bringing people together to play games, and we're trying to create simple kinds of gameplay that appeal to a very broad audience. So it's not like we're specifically trying to focus the games on kids, but we're trying to create environments where people can play together.

Actually, you can play *Tetra's Trackers* one player, but obviously, if you were to play *Pac-Man* one player, it'd be pretty boring. [Laughs] And the other thing we're really focusing on is showing other developers, and especially our partners, the possibilities that we see with connectivity, so they can take this new system, implement it into their gameplay, and use it to creatively

add new features and bring new ideas into gaming without focusing so much on trying to make the games more complex. We can try to attract users that way.

## GMR: So you're trying to set an example for stirring creativity in game design?

SM: Yeah, definitely. We're trying to provide examples and hints for people as to how they might be able to use this idea. With *Pac-Man*, that was a three-person team that put together a game that's very playable on the GC, and it's very fun.

GMR: You're probably tired of hearing the online question, but a game like *F-Zero* seems like it'd be the perfect broadband application. Do you think online play has some sort of negative effect on gaming?

SM: You know, not so much. I don't really think online does something to the industry or is causing a trend we're not in favor of. Really, for me, the most basic element and most important element of entertainment is that it's got to be something that anybody can look at. Say you're walking down the street, you look in a window, see something that you think will interest you,

buy it, go home and play it. You jump right in and are entertained. Whereas the problem with online is that I think there are still a lot of people who don't have online capability. There's a barrier there, and you're essentially creating a product that is available and playable only by a certain group of people, and that's one reason why I don't like the online idea. The major reason, though, is that the business model is not there yet. We're not at a state where we could create an online game and have it be financially viable and sustainable, I think. I definitely think network play and what it does for gameplay is interesting.

#### GMR: Does F-Zero support network play via LAN?

SM: It doesn't feature it right now, but we'll think about it. [Smiles] I'm sure if we did that, then all you guys on the magazine would be buying BBAs and TVs and linking up your GCs. Obviously, that's a very specialized environment where that's happening, but at the same time, it's interesting to see that happen, too.

GMR: Switching gears, are you guys happy to have a game like *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* exclusively for GameCube?

SM: It's not the fact that it's exclusive that makes me happy. It's that for a long time Mr. Kojima has been telling me that he's wanted to work on Nintendo systems, and yet for some reason, the press has been claiming that he doesn't like the GameCube, when in fact, he's actually quite fond of it. For me, I'm just happy that we finally got this chance to work together on a project for GameCube.

GMR: Are there any things that didn't work so well in the first *Pikmin* that you're adjusting for *Pikmin 2*?

SM: Other than the time limit, there wasn't a whole lot from the first game that we wanted to rethink. This time, what we really wanted to do was open players up to more of the world the Pikmin live in. There are a lot of funny things in there that I think people are going to be intrigued by.

GMR: Let's talk about [aborted N64 project] Jungle Emperor Leo. You once said that [estate holder] Osamu Tezuka's son was distracted with other things...is there any chance, now that four or five years have gone by, that we could see that happen?

SM: I think [Tezuka] is actually more interested in doing movies and cinematic things. I still talk to him, but basically it was because the leader of that group at that time was more interested in the movie, and that's why we stopped the idea for the game. But because I do still talk to them, who knows, there might be a chance to do something in the future.

GMR: What's the new Metroid GBA game about?

SM: I think you know more about that game than I do. [Laughs]

GMR: The theory going around is that it's a prequel to the original *Metroid*....

SM: Based on the information that we're giving at the show and from what we've heard from the development team, it's a series of events that take place sometime prior to or during the original NES story line.

GMR: Do you think there's any space on the market to create something like that for GameCube? We've always wondered what a *Symphony of the Night* with amazing animation and detail would look like on PS2. Since a lot of people are going to play this new *Metroid* game on their GB player, do you think that there's any room in the market for a 2D game like *Metroid* designed for GameCube?

SM: I'm certain that if we were to make it, it would be much more beautiful than anything they could do in 2D on PlayStation 2! [Laughs]

One example would be the Four Swords for GameCube that's essentially using the same graphics as the SNES Link to the Past, but as you can see, we're using the power of the GC to do some really incredible effects with the smoke, as well as the number of enemies on the screen.

GMR: But no one has done a really good next-gen 2D game yet. You always hear "2D won't sell anymore," but no one has actually tried.

SM: We've noticed that, and we can't talk about it, so don't tell anyone. [Laughs] With Pac-Man, it looks top-down 2D, but it's actually 3D. But we're looking at different ideas with that as well.

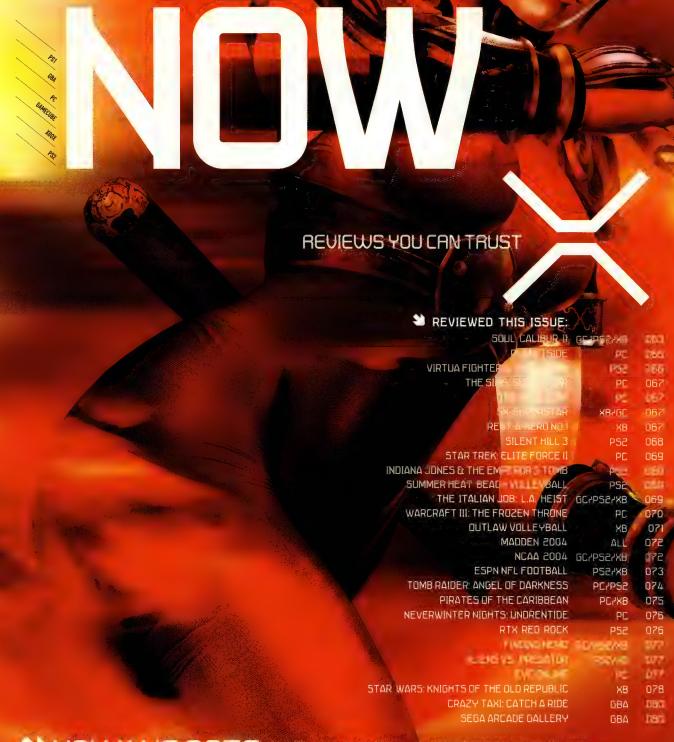
**Bill:** I keep pushing him to make a 2D *Mario...*[Laughs]

GMR: Speaking of 2D, Treasure is good at that. How do you think Wario World came out, and are you working with them on new ideas?

SM: I like working with Treasure, and we're really happy with how Wario World turned out. They're a company that's very talented with 2D, so there's always a possibility.



GBA GC





At GMR, we eat, sleep, drink, and occasionally secrete games. If we say something is a crap sandwich, then don't eat it. If we award it our prestigious Essential Selection award, then you can take your lunch money and blow it on some effervescent digital gaming hoo-ha. Don't hate. Celebrate

1 2 3 4 5 NUERRÉE 6 RÉGRÉTATE 7 ROUTREMOED 8 NO. 1 9 1.1 HA . 10 RESSILIES







← Each version of the game IXbox, PS2, GameCubel, has a different exclusive character to play as. Xbox owners get to tussle as Todd McGratane's Spawn, while PS2 players get Tekken's weaponless Heihachi. GameCube owners get it best, however, with the chance to pick up arms as the adult version of Nintendo's favorite elf-boy, Link. No Wind Waker jokes, please. This ain't no cel-shaded bean sprout. He's a man, baby.

ΧB

PS2



→ The Berserker and Assassin, who weren't playable in the Japanese version, are selectable in Versus mode in the U.S. SCII. Nice one!





## SOUL CALIBUR II

THE WORLD'S BEST 3D WEAPONS BRAWLER RETURNS

TEEN | GAMECUBE | PS2 | XBOX [ALL VERSIONS REVIEWED]

PUBLISHER: MAMCO
DEVELOPER: NAMCO
PRICE- \$49.99
RELEASE. AUGUST 2003
PLAYERS: 1-2

ORIGIN: JAPAN

The world claims to love Soul Calibur, and while it was a significant hit, especially given the console it was released on [Dreamcast], the truth of the matter is that the game's audience was still, in the grand scheme of things, rather limited. This time around, Namco is making damn sure that everyone gets a crack at taking Taki for a tumble on all three platforms.

Good news for gamers all around, but the big question is, How do you follow up one of the best 3D fighting games of all time? In the case of the highly anticipated Soul Calibur II, the answer is clearly more, more, more. Nothing wrong with that!

The series, which started with Soul Blade on PlayStation, is now in its third incarnation, and it brings with it all the things that made the first game so great, as well as loads of new features. The original Soul Calibur cast returns (in one form or another), and the game adds new characters like Cassandra (Sophitia's sister), Yunsung (this year's Hwang-alike), Raphael (fencing specialist), and Talim (the first Filipino tonfa expert ever). Other notable additions to the cast of

combatants are Charade (SCII's version of the multifaceted Edge Master), Necrid (the game's crudfest character designed by Todd McFarlane), and depending on which version of the game you bought, Nintendo's Link, McFarlane's Spawn, or Namco's own Heihachi will also adorn your roster (see sidebar, top). Other characters, like Lizardman, Assassin, and Berserker are available for use in Versus mode, giving gamers a whopping total of 23 different fighters to play as.

Since each duelist has a different fighting style and weapon preference









→ Meet Necrid: A prime example of why Japanese

developers should steer far away from Western "designers" like Todd McFarlane. Not only is this character scrubbish (a cheap, powerful, fast fighter), but his design is taken straight from the pages of Bad American Comic Book Design 101.

#### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

GMR sniffs out the subtle differences between the three different versions.

#### Kicking butts with the Keebler elf

The control in the GameCube version is surprisingly good, with buttons intuitively arranged and response time razor sharp. The Cube Soul Calibur II is nearly as sharp as the Xbox version, and GameCube owners get the coolest exclusive character in Link.

#### No weapons? No problem!

XB

PS<sub>2</sub>

GC

Whether you're using analog or digital controls, the PS2 pad offers the best controls for kicking butts. Heihachi, as lame as he might seem (Tidus from FFX would have been better), is actually very cool. After all, beating up your friends, unarmed, is great for smack talk. But the graphics are the least polished of the three versions.

#### Such pretty green eyes

The Xbox controller, thanks to the ultrastiff D-pad and gummi bear-buttons, is the least responsive controller to play Soul Calibur II with. Spawn is a surprisingly quick character, but his range is limited, and he's, well, Spawn. The graphics are the best of the three versions, though not by much. Loading times are hyperquick. ■€





PlayStation 2



Xbox







(Taki the ninja uses sais, while Nightmare uses a broadsword, etc.), learning your favorite character's strength and weaknesses versus the field of opponents is a deep and enjoyable affair. Unlocking everyone's extra weapons in Weapon Master mode (the extra weapons are a throwback to the Soul Blade days) adds even more replay value, due to each weapon's differing attributes.

Besides the extra weapons and massive collection of unlockables tucked within, most major gameplay tweaks and additions (i.e. wall attacks) are subtle. enriching the versatility of combat rather than reinventing it.

The thing that makes SCII such an

overall great gaming package is that it's easy to play, yet difficult to master; newbies and veterans alike can co-exist. Beneath the energized gameplay (which truly shines in multiplayer) lies a game of sheer polish, style, and finesse. The graphics are beautiful and the sound effects are phenomenal, from the harsh clang of metal-on-metal weapons to the epic orchestral soundtrack

Of course SCII has a downside. namely too many similar characters (was Cassandra really necessary?) and a lack of balance between cheap characters like Necrid and difficult-to-master types like lvy. Also, once everything has been unlocked in Weapon Master mode,

single-player action quickly stales. The final disappointment is how similar all three console versions are, despite the unique characters each one has. Still, minor gripes all.

Not quite the giant step in innovation that Soul Calibur was to Soul Blade but still the high-water mark for 3D weapons combat, Soul Calibur II is in a class all its own. **!€\_James Mielke** 



SPIRITUAL SUCCESSOR TO: SAMURAI SHOWDOWN 2 WAIT FOR IT: TEKKEN 5

#### 2ND OPINION

Soul Calibur was a favorite among mu college cohorts, and playing Soul Calibur II brings back all the warm and fuzzu memories of days gone by, It's not guite the revolution I was expecting after waiting all these uears, but it's still Soul Calibur and that's all right by me 1 Andrew Pfister

#### [RIDIN' THE PS TRAIN]

PlanetSide thankfully offers a few options for those of you who get tired of running for miles in search of a fray. The most basic choice is the Instant Action feature, which will take you straight to wherever a rumble's going on. But since you don't have any control over where you'll end up, using a HART (High Altitude Rapid Transport) shuttle may be a better idea. This vehicle will take you anywhere on the map screen, just be prepared to wait if all the shuttles are taken. Lastly, the warp gates scattered throughout the levels are a fast way to zap yourself from one locale to the next. ▶€







→ Some have said that PlanetSide's graphical style and overall aesthetic s reminiscent of a multiplayer Halo. It's really not. It's got more of a generic sci-fi look, but with more garish colors. The colors make sense from a team perspective (don't want to shoot your own boys), but seem pretty counterintuitive from a camouflage perspective.





## PLANETSIDE

YOU COULD PAY MORE, BUT WHY WOULD YOU?

TEEN | PC

PUBLISHER: SONY ONLINE
DEVELOPER SONY ONLINE
PRICE \$49.99

PRICE \$49.99
RELEASE: AVAILABLE NOW
PLAYERS: 1-4000 (OH SNAP!)
ORIGIN: U.S.A.

Let's just cut to the chase: No, PlanetSide is not worth a monthly \$13 fee. Yeah, it sounds great. There's an expansive sci-fi planet; three factions sporting distinct strengths and weaknesses, all vying for control of the planet; vehicles and weapons galore; and, of course, tons of players going at each other's throats online. The problem is that great ideas often get in the way of what should be tops on people's priority list-fun. Spurts of fun erupt here and there on Auraxis, if you're lucky enough to find a squad that sticks around and you've got enough certification points to pump your dude up and wreak some nasty on an unwitting opponent. But

more often than not, you've got one but not the other, so you feel all dressed up with no place to go. In fact, finding a hot zone that doesn't play like a deathmatch in a broom closet (or getting to a hot zone at all) takes more legwork than you'd expect for the payoff. And with "capturethe-base" as the recycled goal every time you log on, you start wondering pretty quickly what else there is to do. At its core, PlanetSide isn't expansive or persistent-it's just the same scenario repeated in different environments with different people. One strong point is a certification points system that unlocks new weapons, armor, and vehicle options; what becomes available depends on your experience level. And If you're lucky enough to play with a group of buddies—especially with a commander—then the team-based game structure definitely has its moments. But why pay for virtually the same experience every month when a straight-up sci-fi online shooter for 50 bucks would have sufficed.

\_Jeanne Kim Trais



BETTER THAN: ULTIMA ONLINE NOT AS GOOD AS: TRIBES 2 WAIT FOR IT: STAR WARS GALAXIES

#### 2ND. OPINION

PC

PlanetSide was originally described to me as a mmo-Halo, which as you might imagine. sounds pretty fine. In actual practice, it's something altogether different. The game Lacks focus and intensity, but Planetside's developers have the means to tighten things, and here's hoping they do. I 🗲









→ In case you've been blindly favoring the other fighting game series instead of Virtua Fighter, you'll be glad to know that Evolution features two very Tekken-esque fighters in Goh and Brad. Those two cutups are great for neck breakin' antics. Hoo!



#### IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY] I

If you've ever wanted to play the original Virtua Fighter in arcade-perfect form but couldn't afford the original quarter-munching unit, now's your chance. Exclusive to the U.S. release of Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution is the Virtua Fighter 10th Anniversary mode, which lets you play with characters and backgrounds in their original style. It's actually better than "arcade perfect," since the mode implements some of Evolution's moves and characters. But you can opt to play against only the characters that were available when the game debuted back in 1993 if you wish.





## VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION

THE FIGHT OF YOUR LIFE

TEEN | PS2

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER AM2
PRICE \$19.99
RELEASE: AUGUST 2003
PLAYERS. 1-2

ORIGIN: JAPAN

PS2

Evolution indeed. In the 10 years since 3D fighting games were created, the Virtua Fighter series has always been the high-water mark for both depth and innovation. But for the grace of Virtua Fighter do games like Tekken even exist. And now, VF4: Evolution is here, and it is not only the best 3D fighter of all time, it will make you a better fighting-game player.

While most fighting games feature the stock-standard Arcade, Versus, Training, Survival, and Time Attack modes (as Evolution does), no fighting game has ever really managed to elevate the single-player experience beyond fighting a preset number of characters in a certain order. Evolution shatters that

cliché. In its phenomenally absorbing Quest mode, Evolution takes you through an intimidating number of cities, wherein you meet and compete against hundreds of that city's best players. Each arcade within each city also has a specific number of alternate mission objectives (such as knocking your foe against a wall with a striking attack). For every mission accomplished and city conquered, you earn items to customize your character with and money to buy items. Every so often you enter a ranking match, which, if won, raises your level and notoriety.

Of course, multiplayer action is just as awesome and, for newbies, the extensive Training mode is not only good

fun, it's comprehensive beyond belief. Evolution's stat engine lets you analyze your tendencies and improve your techniques.

The only glitch in this dynamic, beautiful game is a funky memory-save system. Despite that, *Evolution* is less a videogame and more a virtual dojo where forging your own fighter's reputation is not only an option, but an endlessly addictive obligation. **Let James Mielke** 

GMR 10/10

BETTER THAN: TEKKEN 4
WOULD MAKE: BRUCE LEE PROUD
WAIT FOR IT. DEAD OR ALIVE ONLINE

#### 2ND. OPINION

It took Virtua Fighter 4 to (finaliul) sell me on these here newfangled 3D brawlers. This extension of that game's greatness is deeper, wider, and a mere \$20. Evolution. It might not make uou a better human being, but rest assured you're going to learn a thing or two about flabiling games-for cheapl David Chen



#### THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR ROCK 'N' ROLL-PLAYING

EVERYONE | PC

Enough already! EA continues to milk The Sims by releasing an endless stream of expansion packs. The Sims: Superstar is the latest; this time, your sim has a shot at stardom.

For \$29.99, you get more items and a music and movie studio complex. By playing through some tedious and unchallenging minigames, you earn money and your star power increases. Playing out your career is fun for a little while, but there's just too much tedium and repetition involved to inject freshness into a tired franchise. And if you don't have the chops to make it as a real rocker, there's always a future on the reality TV circuit. I Di Luo



PUR ELECTRONICS ARTS TIEL MAXIS REL AVAILABLE NOW

\$29.99 PLAYERS 1 OR SIN U.S.A.

BETTER THAN: THE SIMS: VACATION NOT AS GOOD AS: THE SIMS: UNLEASHED WAIT FOR IT: THE SIMS 2

#### GTA: VICE CITY MOUSELOOK MAYHEM MATURE | PC

What is there to say about Vice City that hasn't already been said? It's the greatest next-gen game ever (to date), and the PS2 version has already sold a kajillion copies.

Now, PC gamers get their turn, just like they did with the port of GTA3. The open-ended and uproariously funny game remains the same, but with higher-res graphics, the ability to play your own MP3s, and mouselook, which makes controlling Tommy when he's on foot much easier. Controlling the vehicles however (especially airborne ones) is a lot more difficult, so plugging in a joystick is highly recommended for those missions. I Tom Price



PDB ROCKSTAR NEW ROCKSTAR NORTH

PLAYERS 1

NOT AS GOOD AS: VICE CITY ON PS2 WAIT FOR IT: THE NEXT GTA PC PORT

### SX SUPERSTAR NO CLAIM TO FAME

TEEN | XBOX [REVIEWED] | GC

You can become a celebrity in SX Superstar, winning all sorts of motorcycle races, taking home fat endorsement checks after your rider whores out ad space on his body, collecting hot girlfriends, and moving into swanky domiciles. But, in the interest of truth in advertising, it's necessary to quote journalist A.J. Benza, who once quipped, "Fame. Ain't it a bitch?" Spartan in its design and curiously devoid of such necessities as customizable bikes or the option to change the controller configurations. Superstar can barely keep pace with the middle of the pack. I Greg Orlando



PER AKA ACCLAIM DEY CLIMAX REL AVAILABLE NOW PRICE \$29.99 PLATERS 1-2 ORIGIN U.K.

NOT AS GOOD AS, MOTO GP2 WAIT FOR IT: REAL STARDOM



## RENT-Δ-HERO NO.1 RONG ENOUGH TO BE THE HERO?

Now here's an example of a game that should've stayed in Japan. Originally released on the Japanese Genesis and later remade on Dreamcast, Rent-A-Hero No. 1 was wisely passed on by Sega of America both times. AIA has decided to release it in the States, possibly to cash in on the new open-ended-andmission-based-like-Grand Theft Auto genre whose games appear to be swelling the shelves.

Like the bastard child of GTA and www.engrish.com, Rent-A-Hero No. 1 botches an otherwise clever premise describes as "super stupid excellent gameplay, two out of three isn't bad. right? As a poory haired teen from a...er, unique suburban family, you transform into a hero with the aid of a power suit-the only catch is it's a rental, and you'll need to earn money to keep using it. And so the main thrust of the game equates to "get a job." Along the way, you'll do lots of silly errands and fight tons of thugs where you repeatedly mash a single button to make different moves come

out). "Hitarious" puns abound, such as the humorous "Sam n' Ella Burger fast-lood chain and your "Creamcast" game console. Oh yes, you will certainly giggle right through the game's many load times.

XB

PC

Rent-A-Hero No. 1 was fugly when it came out on Dreamcast, and it's even fuglier now. Everything about this game is low-rent, and nothing has improved in the Xbox port. The game even uses the D-pad for its 3D movement and features one of the worst cameras seen in a game yet.

Rent-A-Hero No. 1 was poised to fall into the same fun, quirky category of nichey Japanese games like Incredible Crisis and Seaman, As-II is, it's less Seaman and more Diet Shenmue . Michael Vreeland

STURN ALL DANCE DEV SEGA/COOLNET BB. HELY 2003

2R1Ch \$44,99 PLAYERS 1 ORIGIN JAPAN

BETTER THAN, BAGGING GROCERIES NOT AS GOOD AS: GRAND THEFT AUTO IN YOU COULD ALWAYS BE: A RENT-A-COP

















## SILENT HILL 3

#### SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES...BACK

MATURE | PS2

PUBLISHER KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KCET
PRICE: \$49.99
RELEASE: AUGUST 2003
PLAYERS: †
ORIGIN: JAPAN

PS<sub>2</sub>

Games don't come much darker than this, in both the figurative and literal sense. Set in one of the bleakest, most hopeless, sunless, souldestroying settings ever conceived for a videogame, it's time to ask the question, Are Silent Hill games actually fun?

The quality is undeniable, for sure. Featuring the best graphics of any PS2 game yet, *Silent Hill 3* is, at times, almost excruciatingly frightening to play through. With malevolent creatures lurking just out of sight at any given corner and with a deliberately uncooperative camera, you really never know what's coming. Playing on people's fear of the unknown is used to great effect in *Fatal Frame*, but in the case of *SH3*, this basic tenet is set for

maximum impact. The game, despite the helpful mapping system, is superlinear. Maneuvering through each area usually consists of running down a dark, unlit hallway (Heather uses one of the most ineffective flashlights in the history of flashlights) and trying every door until one of them opens. An open door merely signifies that the items within are up for the grabbing, and away you go. It limits exploration but creates a tense, claustrophobic atmosphere that more action-oriented games like *Resident Evil* fail to muster.

Combat is weak as usual and, for the most part, is actually best avoided when possible. Since there is no reward for actually defeating enemies, ammo and

supplies are better saved for boss battles. The game's biggest weakness is its lack of any levity or humor to counterpoint the story's overwhelmingly serious tone.

Ultimately, it's the well-directed story and its stunning conclusion that provides the much-needed payoff and motivation to finish the game. With a slew of secrets designed to encourage repeat visits, SH3 may not be "fun," but it certainly is compelling. If James Mielke



8/10

BETTER THAN: ALONE IN THE DARK: TNN NOT AS GOOD AS: RESIDENT EVIL (GAMECUBE) WAIT IT FOR IT: FATAL FRAME 2

#### 2ND. OPINION

First things first: This is a Silent Hill game. So expect fiall-esque monstrosities, long stretches of silence. claustrophobic camerawork, and a decorating scheme flushed straight out of David Fincher's bathroom. More bad trip than adventure. it's a *Slient Hill* story through and through and still the best at what it does; fraulog

your freaking nerves

■ \_Bavid Chen





## STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE II PHASERS TO WHUP-ASS

The biggest complaint about Star Trek: Elite Force II-its most insipid quality, if you will-is that it makes you actually want to like Star Trek. Sorry if that offends you, Trekkies, but most people (like this reviewer! think Trek was dumb to begin with, mostly because situations were always worked out with bits of cleverness and strategy. Screw that "set phasers to stun" crap-we want to see aliens getting f-ed up by big honking guns. That's exactly what Elite Force II gives us, and with surprising aplomb.

Elite Force II picks . . . . . . left off, with the ship trapped inside a Borg cube that's headed toward Earth. leader of the Hazard Team, an elite essence, a bunch of heavily armed

As in the first game, the action here is furious, with lots of guns and fun toys to play with. But Elite Force's single-player campaign doesn't last



that figure somewhat. Still, the actual with some clever little puzzle bits. But for a first-person-shooter, it can be a

Elite Force II will really show off your videocard, provided you have a smoothly with most stuff turned on. Just make sure you tell people you it is to play. I Tom Price

PAR ACTIVISION DEV RITUAL

PRIOS \$39.99 PLAYERS 1-4

BETTER THAN, ELITE FORCE NOT AS GOOD AS HALF-LIFE WAIT FOR IT DOOM III



#### INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB WHIP IT GOOD

TEEN | PS2 [REVIEWED] | XB

All the way back in GMR 03, we reviewed the Xbox version of Emperor's Tomb. Why the PS2 version took so long to come out, we can't really say, but despite the few graphical drawbacks one might expect from an Xbox-to-PS2 port, it's still the same fun adventure. The textures aren't quite as sharp and the framerate is a little dodgy. but Indy controls slightly better on the PS2 controller, thanks to the additional shoulder buttons. If you have the option, pick up the Xbox version, but if you don't, the PS2 version is fine. Don't worry about missing out on anything too significant. No matter what system it's on, it's pure Indiana Jones. I Andrew Pfister



DEV HICASARTS DIAVERS 1 ARROW HIS.A SEL AVAILABLE NOW

BETTER THAN: TOMB RAIDER: AOD NOT AS GOOD AS: ICO WAIT FOR IT. TAK & THE POWER OF JUJU

#### SUMMER BEACH VOLLEYBALL TURN ON THE A/C

TEEN | PS2

PS2 finally receives a collection of saucy virtual women who jump and bounce under the flimsy pretense of beach volleyball. Alas, these ladies are hamstrung by weak animation, dinner-theater accents, and brain-dead A.I., and you can't appreciate their asses-uh, assets through the long-range camera or motion-blurred replays. Summer Heat also includes reams of unnecessary stats and a cheesy commentator, neither of which enhances the spike-dominated rallies and onscreen arrows that surgically remove strategy by showing where each shot is headed. Ogling has never been so tedious. I Zach Meston



PS<sub>2</sub>

GC

PLAYERS 1-4 DEV ACCLAIM HEL AVAILABLE NO DRIGHT B.K.

NOT AS GOOD AS: DOAXBV WAIT FOR IT: OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL

#### THE ITALIAN JOB: L.A. HEIST OUT OF GAS

TEEN | XBOX [REVIEWED] | PS2 | GC

The Italian Job: L.A. Heist is the game tie-in to the recent movie starring Marky Mark, which is itself a remake of the classic 1969 comic caper starring Michael Caine and Benny Hill. If you haven't seen the new movie and have no idea what it's about, the content of the game would suggest a story about a near-future Los Angeles where humans have been completely replaced by Mini Coopers doomed to carry out menial errands around the city. It's really nothing more than a crappy checkpoint racer with the licenses of one flop movie and one underpowered car painted on as thinly as gold leaf. ■ Tom Price



PRICE \$49.99 REVECTIMAX PLAYERS 1-4 REL JUNE 2003

BETTER THAN: POLE POSITION NOT AS GOOD AS, MIDNIGHT CLUB II
WAIT FOR IT, NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND\*







→ Even in the serious, story-driven campaign, there are humorous touches. Check out the tiny panda head on Illidan Stormrage's weapon. The return of the funny is only one of The Frozen Throne's excellent additions.





TEEN | PC





## WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE

THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RETURNS

PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL DEVELOPER: BLIZZARD

PRICE. \$35.99
RELEASE- AVAILABLE NOW
PLAYERS: 1 (1-12 ONLINE)
ORIGIN. U.S.A.

WarCraft III's single flaw is its stilted, serious single-player campaign. Previous Blizzard games are marked by a goofy good-naturedness; WarCraft III's humorless campaign is both anomalous and fairly repetitive. Good news: The Frozen Throne is not only occasionally funny, but also creative. The four single-player campaigns are constantly inventive, featuring unique goals and mission structures. There are Capture the Flag missions. There are splitscreen missions in which you must simultaneously perform several tasks. There are hilariously frantic secret missions. Even the standard build-andsweep missions usually have some

additional goal to offset the standard formula. Best of all, the bonus orc campaign is more Diablo than WarCraft.

The single-player game isn't the only great thing about this expansion. Most of the additions are available in multiplayer, so you get most of the new units— including the night elves' mountain giant, the humans' airborne dragon riders, and the orc's bat rider—to use in Battle.net and skirmish matches, as well as two new units and a new hero type for each race. You can also hire heroes, who represent new races that will assist you in the single-player game, such as the water-dwelling Naga, the Pandaren Brewmaster, and the Draenei, who look

like aged Domo-kuns.

With Diablo II: Lord of Destruction and StarCraft: Brood War, Blizzard showed that an expansion can be more than just a bunch of new units and tilesets. The Frozen Throne raises that bar even higher by bringing both the gameplay and the funny. There's so much new content, it's more like an excellent sequel to the original. I Ron Dulin



BETTER THAN: WARCRAFT III NOT AS GOOD AS: TOTAL ANNIHILATION WAIT IT FOR IT: WORLD OF WARCRAFT

#### 2ND OPINION

I'm big on Bilizzard games in general cettli pleujng Diablo II—sobi), but Warcraft III realig didn't do it for me. The camera was too drawn in and it wasn't as hillarlous as Bilizzard games usualig are. While the camera in Frozen Throne Isn't any better, the funny is back, and so am i.

outlaw volleuball





→ If you feel Dead or Alive:

Xtreme Beach Volleyball
gives you plenty of ta-tas,
but less actual volleyball
action, then Outlaw Volleyball
should surely give you what
you're looking for. Of course,
if you just want to straddle
some dude's face, well,
that's OK, too.

## OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL

SAND IN THE U-ASS-ELINE

MATURE | XBOX

For those who found DOA:

Xtreme Beach Volleyball rich
in women but lacking in gameplay,
Outlaw Volleyball comes as a
welcome replacement, since it
focuses on the sport rather than
swapping swimsuits. Character
selection includes a boozy, toothless
redneck; a Bruce Lee/Elvis
impersonator; a Russian femme
fatale who pulls a pistol to dispute
line calls; and a blonde bombshell
who is clearly intended to challenge
Lara Croft for the crown of hottest
game babe ever.

What's surprising about *Outlaw Volleyball* is that it plays as well as it looks, like *NBA Jam* on the beach. Players can use a turbo meter for speed bursts, additional power, and

gravity-defying spikes and serves. Characters are upgraded by engaging in off-the-wall drills that were clearly inspired by Sega's *Virtua Tennis* series, like spiking a group of obsessed fans who storm the net, *Space Invaders* fashion.

Control is tighter than most of the swimsuits the women wear, though it requires practice. Players frustrated with their friends or the CPU can duck under the net and kick the crap out of their opponents to steal turbo regeneration power, but the fighting minigame is clearly just for laughs.

Our only gripe is that the CPU occasionally performs impossible digs when its players should get a face full of sand. Still, with four-

player support and competition available on Xbox Live, *Outlaw Volleyball* is reason enough to stay inside on a hot summer day. This isn't a game for children, however. With its sexual references, tan lines, and gyrating asses, *Outlaw Volleyball* makes *DOA* look like McDonald's Playland.

#### Doug Trueman

PUE SIMON & SCHUSTER PRICE \$49.99
DEV HYPNOTIX PLAYERS 1-4
REL JULY 2003 DEBORN U.S.A.



BEITER THAN, SUMMER HEAT BEACH NOT AS GOOD AS: BEACH SPIKERS WAIT FOR IT, DOAXBY 2

## OUT OF THESE PAGES AND INTO YOUR HOMES!



Join Shoe and the rest of the Game Group editors as they invade your screen with the latest game news and releases that will jumpstart your weekend!

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HOTWIRED's Big Video Game Hunting hosted by Erica Hill on CNN Headline News.



## ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?!?

IT'S A YES OR NO OUESTION...

It's that time again. You're not here to cosplay and dress up like Final Fantasy X's Tidus 'n' Yuna. You're ready to eat red meat, strap on some pads, and sit your butt down in front of the tube to play your favorite football games. Oh, but what to play, what to play. Well, what do we have here? Football reviews! What a coincidence.

## MADDEN 2004

ACT LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

It's significant that radically divisive language is often used when describing Madden. You'll hear passionate football gamers talk about how Madden pretends to be hardcore, suffers from rehash syndrome, and generally lags behind in innovation. Then you'll hear. "But it's the greatest f\*\*\*\*\*\* football game ever created."

Madden's long-running history is both burden and buoy, as a product doesn't get this polished without continuing to improve on what's right. 04 offers more of the same, but also takes encouraging steps toward true innovation.

EA's vaunted Playmaker feature gives you the ability, on offense and defense, to interact with or change the game's A.I. on the fly. Need a DB to drop a bit deeper

during a pass play? Want to get that pulling guard to swing upfield? That's what Playmaker allows for, and it's a perfect implementation of an easy, fun, and rewarding feature.

Owner's mode checks in as the other major improvement here. Now, users are given free reign over everything from the price of concessions (cheaper beer!) to the pursuit of building a new stadium.

Online play is refined thanks to EA's new messenger system, which lets you chat in lobbies and look for buddies online. In-game voice chat is a hoot, as long as you stay in your age group.

Other titles may impress this fall, but anyone who tackles Madden should come out grinnin'. It's superb in every regard. **I**←\_Dan Leahy











BETTER THAN: ALL THE REST NOT AS GOOD AS: MEETING RAY LEWIS WAIT FOR IT, NEL STREET

## NCAA 2004

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT EVERYONE | PS2 [REVIEWED] | GC | XB

Going on three years now, any fellow gamer unlucky enough to be around me after a few beers got to hear my rant about how NCAA is actually the best football game on the market. In a sober state, however, logic and clarity had me firmly on Madden's side.

Well, I'm here to tell you that sober, rational thoughts aren't always right. NCAA stands as (at least) Madden's equal and easily justifies a \$50 expenditure.

All the great stuff from past years is here: There are tons of college teams (even more this year), rivalries, classic games, boisterous crowds, a Dynasty mode, and so on. More important, however, are the subtle gameplay changes that make NCAA stand apart.

NCAA now features "impact" blocks,

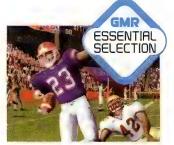
which can occur near the line of scrimmage or as your wide receiver escorts you into the end zone 50 yards downfield. It's a great addition in terms of realism and one of the more impressive visual feats in the game.

On the defensive side, NCAA turns heads (literally) with its "line of sight" logic. Players whose heads are turned to see the play react properly. Players running backwards or looking at their man won't magically snap around to track something they didn't see. It sounds basic, but NCAA is one of the first games to get this dynamic right.

It's easy to see where I'm going with this. Improvements galore and online play (with chat) make NCAA second to none. I € Dan Leahy











NOT AS GOOD AS: A FULL SCHOLARSHIP

PS<sub>2</sub> GBA

GC











← The hits are big and the defense tough in ESPN NFL Football. If you're brave enough to rely primarily on a passing game—like say, oh, the Raiders—expect to get picked off like flies near a bug zapper. Mixing up your attacks to spread the opposing team's defense thin is key here. Plus, ESPN supports Xbox Live, whereas Madden does not.

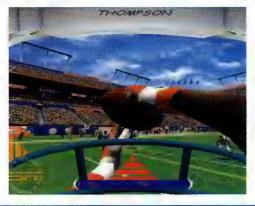


### [FIRST PERSON FOOTBALL]

We hear your skepticism, but trust us—ESPN Football's First Person mode is actually quite fun to play. It's not perfect, but this unique experience looks good and provides a promising diversion from traditional play.

The lack of peripheral vision (you can only see in a 70-degree cone) means that some elements, like the passing game and secondary coverage, are more challenging. But it's also more realistic. Dropping back five steps, identifying the pass coverage and blitzes, and then delivering a strike to a receiver you can't even see is no easy task, but it provides one heck of a rush. Ask any NFL quarterback.

Here's hoping Sega keeps First Person mode in future versions. The notion of an 11-on-11 first-person game makes us feverish with future anticipation. ▶





XΒ

PS2

→ "GRAB THAT S\*\*\*!" you might holler as you attempt to reel in the rocket your QB just launched at you. ESPN's First Person mode is yet another innovation the trend-setting team at Visual Concepts has produced. Bet on Madden to try and implement something

### ESPN NFL FOOTBALL

SEGA'S STILL IN THE GAME

VERYORE | XBOX (REVIEWED) | PS2

Until the release of ESPN NFL Football, elegant end tables and professional football lived in separate realms. But thanks to The Crib, one of several new features in Sega's latest football title, fashion-forward football fans can follow their on-field exploits with an interior-design chaser.

Formerly known as the critically acclaimed NFL 2K series, Sega's partnership with ESPN goes further toward incorporating television-style presentation and production values than any other game on the market. Chris Berman's pre- and post-game delivery is vintage Boomer, and ESPN's graphical overlays for replays, stats, and player profiles look sharp.

Unfortunately, on the field, Sega falls short of the more immediate action, tighter controls, and more powerful on-field flexibility of Madden 2004. 2K3 fans familiar with Sega's more realistic take on football might disagree, but this feels slow, flat, and less exciting in comparison.

It's not that ESPN Football is subpar. On the contrary—this year's game is better than ever, with a strong Franchise mode, an efficient play-calling interface, a cool First Person mode (!), and The Crib. Designing and decorating your own plush pad is more intriguing than it sounds. As you accomplish certain feats, the game places collectible objects in your crib.

But the action doesn't feel quite right.

Players' animations, while smooth, feel floaty and imprecise—sometimes, it even looks like they're gliding. This makes the passing game particularly frustrating; not being able to see a receiver's final cut on a fly route can mean the difference between a TD and an incompletion...or worse. On the plus side, the new power-up turbo option allows players to execute special jukes by holding down the Turbo button instead of tapping it.

ESPN Pro Football lives under a massive shadow, but the First Person mode, the solid gameplay, and the other new extras make it a worthwhile purchase for gamers intimidated by Madden...or those just looking for a different experience.



PUB SESA OF AMERICA PRICE \$49.99

DEV VISUAL CONCEPTS PLAYERS 1-16 (PSZ), 1-8 (XBOX)

REL SEPTEMBER 2009 CENTRE U.S.A.

GMR



BETTER THAN, NFL 2K3 NOT AS GOOD AS: MADDEN 2004 WAIT FOR IT: NFL BLITZ





# TOMBRAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

A TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE ART

TEEN | PS2 [REVIEWED] 🤲

PHRITISHER- FINNS DEVELOPER CORE PRICE: \$49.99

RELEASE. AVAILABLE NOW PLAYERS

ORIGIN. H.K.

Befitting a venerable videogame franchise with big-budget movie ties and a massive built-in audience. Lara Croft's latest outing benefits from slick staging: a sleek interface, stirring string music, and a compelling-if not gripping-CG intro. This luster, one learns, rarely goes beyond skin deep, and it's riddled with holes. Fans, fear not: Lady Lara is as tar heeled, top heavy, and tedious to manage as ever.

The Angel of Darkness finds Lara fleeing across the rain-spattered rooftops of Paris in the middle of the night; someone's butchered one of her peers, and she's now the prime suspect. There's no fortune and glory at stake on this quest-this time, it's personal. And as

Eidos' latest slew of advertising is eager to inform you, this is a shadier, more sinister (and sellable) episode in the life of Ms. Croft. Dodging France's finest has left Lara unusually cold-blooded and less droll than we recall: Once exemplary of the sexiest sort of stiff-lipped Brit, she is now, quite simply, a bitch.

Then again, this is the point, one that's driven in via a series of crudely crafted branching conversation trees, one of a few new (flimsily wrought) features, including pawning sports watches and LPs for Euros and very slowly rooting through someone's kitchen drawers in search of, say, a spare ammo clip. Even more awkward is the vaunted power-up system, which requires impromptu

bodybuilding in order to access new areas. It's flawed in both practice and rationale (anytime the extra ounce of strength is actually crucial, the solution is right at hand), and reeks of lofty plans left unfinished. Not surprisingly, new playable character Kurtis Trent doesn't need to build up his stats-he's guite fit as it is, thank you, ma'am. Of course that leaves less backtracking for the player, so maybe his manliness is a bit of a boon.

Controlling Lara is like a dream-that one where you simply can't get to where you want to go fast enough, no matter how hard you try. Those who've played any of a number of recent entries in any number of game genres will find Lara's new action set suspect, arbitrary, and

### 2ND. OPINION

Raaaarghi Controlling Lara is like plaulog Ice hockey in a 1958 Buick with a flat tire and a potato where the steering wheel should be. And that's being generous Retween this and the truly evil spawn that is the camera. Angel of Darkness confirms what manu have suspected for uears. Core Design are no bloody good 16





→ Much hullabaloo has been made regarding the introduction of new playable character Kurtis Trent. Not only is he tough, scruffylooking, and a fan of big bikes, but he also possesses some pretty impressive psychic skills (of which the player is privy to none), such as include the ability to wield the Chirugai, a bladed objet d'art, with deadly hands-free precision. All that and he gets to share a high-stakes, slow motion, entirely unerotically charged "moment" with Ms. Croft.





→ Keeping with the times, Lara's sparkling personality's not the only thing to receive a retuning. Every aspect of the game's been given an extra sheen of grit, from the spooky cyclopean architecture to her selection of maneuvers (neck-snapping), and including the story itself, which dabbles with organized crime, genetic manipulation, and a faux-Cthuloid cult. Fternal Darkness did it bigger. better, and with a hell of a lot more style.

occasionally contradictory: She can't stealthily tiptoe while carrying a gun, nor can she stealthily snap some fellow's neck while standing upright. Turning 90 degrees remains teeth-gnashingly tedious, and we're willing to bet that Ms. Croft is one of the few polygonal adventurers out there who still can't iump onto a ladder. It all hammers home one very important point: Lara may be easier on the eyes than ever, but she's still a pain in the ass when it comes to telling her what to do.

That's not the whole of this Angel's flaws, though. The levels are suitably grandiose and handsomely crafted, but—as with the power-up system—they feel rushed, and poorly synched with

gameplay goals. The joy's been sucked out of exploration, and what remains finds the player trekking back and forth and sniffing for clues with little in the way of direction, explanation, or rationale. Often, death is instantaneous and unavoidable, based more on trial and error (and frequent trips to the Save screen) than sensibility...or even skill.

As with many of the latest slew of licensed, spun-off, and otherwise compromised-for-the-mainstream games, the learning curve here is pretty shallow, making completion a matter of how much you can take rather than how much you can handle. And depending on where your personal interests lay, you might be willing to put up with quite a

bit. Such as wading your way, Sisyphuslike, towards the conclusion-in spite of claustrophobic camerawork, phantom polygons, miscued sound effects, and punctuation-free subtitles-on the misguided belief that with big games come big payoffs. Purists will say that this is all part of the venerable series' charm; we say that's irrelevant. This is what you get for your \$50, and it ain't that good. If David Chen

OVER-RAIDED

BETTER THAN PORTAL RUNNER AS TEDIOUS AS: REAL-LIFE ARCHAEOLOGY WAIT FOR IT TOMB RAIDER. THE CRADLE OF LIFE



### PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN YO HO HO.

TEEN | XB [REVIEWED] | PC

Pirates of the Caribbean isn't just another crappy movie-licensed game. Maybe that's because it started life as another game (Sea Dogs 2) and later had the movie license slapped over it. And maybe it's because of these more legitimate beginnings that the game feels like a pretty solid open-endedstyle RPG là la Morrowindl. But it's almost definitely because of the movie lie-in that the game feels rushed and incomplete. That's a shame, because RPG lans will have a lot of fun running around towns, trading cargo and talking to random scalawags. The rest of us will be rather bored, except for the naval battle sections that are a blast, especially when boarding other ships. The water effects and weather all look really sweet, too. We'd feel good about recommending this game to RPG fans if not for the stuttery framerates. Still, Pirates of the Caribbean is one of the better movie-licensed games to come out in quite a while. 14 Tom Price

ΧB

PC

PS<sub>2</sub>



DEV BETHESDA SOFTWORKS PLAYERS 1

BETTER THAN: THE RIDE AT DISNEYLAND NOT AS GOOD AS: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT WAIT (A LONG TIME) FOR IT: GALLEON



# NEVERWINTER NIGHTS: SHADOWS OF

-UP HAS NEVER BEEN SO FUN

More than a mere expansion pack, BioWare has conjured up something substantial with Neverwinter Nights: Shadows of Undrentide. Think more classes, more weapons, and, best of all, more dress-up time with your henchmen, But to get the most out of this game, start the expansion pack with a brand-new character. We imported a high-level cleric-Beaverskull Bablicious-from NWN and found Undrentide to be too easy.

SOU takes place as a separate story line running concurrently to NWN. It starts you off as a student whose teacher (and town) has come under attack. SOU's action is tight and focused, with concentrated exploring, but also with more options that affect alliances

PC

PS<sub>2</sub>

throughout battles, so really explore the dialogue trees with everyone and everything you meet. Your guest to find the evil behind the siege opens up SOU's new prestige classes, including the one our cleric was working toward: the devilish Blackquard.

Along the way, you'll hear something you won't expect: laughter. It's obvious BioWare had a lot of fun writing SOU, as evidenced by all the rollicking dialogues and scenarios you find yourself in. But the best feature is playing Barbie with your henchmen. Gone are the days of asking your henchmen to level up; now, you can outfil him with armor and items, levelling them up to your tastes

This expansion has more going for it than most full games. I \_Jason Babler





# 005



### RTX RED ROCK

NOT PAST PRIME

TEEN DS2

In the latest title from LucasArts, players control E.Z. Wheeler, a space cowboy with a gun for an arm, a cybernetic eve with multiple scan modes, and a collection of doohickeysincluding a grappling beam-that let him explore a vast world. If you're reminded of one Samus Aran, we're not surprised. To put it bluntly: RTX Red Rock is a Metroid Prime wannabe that fails on almost every level.

The game begins with a story about purging Mars of aliens called L.E.D.s, but quickly becomes buried in a maze of repeated textures, uninspired graphics, weak sound effects, soulless gunplay, and a frame rate jerkier than a shuttle liftoff.

Because the player can see four different "spectrums," the developers apparently decided to make certain enemies virtually invisible if the right eyepiece is not equipped. This leads to aggravating and spontaneous deaths. But there is life on Mars: Scattered through the game are humans who apparently have nothing better to do but stand like statues, waiting to be rescued. The only

bright spot in the game is Wheeler's interaction with I.R.I.S., an A.I. construct-essentially Cortana from Halo but from a 1950s New York diner-that players use to obtain maps, hints, and operate vehicles and machinery.

RTX Red Rock plays like a threedimensional version of Midway's arcade classic Xenophobe in the sense that it's set in a contemporary space world-one that's cramped and fragile-instead of sprawling and vast, Unfortunately, this turns what should be a fun, spaghettiwestern style space shoot-'em-up into a race for an open airlock door.

■ Doug Trueman



WAIT FOR IT STARCRAFT GHOST



### FINDING NEMO UNDER THE SEA

When you beat out The Matrix Reloaded for total box office receipts, you know you've got a hot property. Pixar's Finding Nemo proved to be quite the summertime delight for moviegoers, and its corresponding videogame cash-in is noticeably better than previous Disney film-to-game transfers. The visuals aren't as impressive as the movies, but the underwater aesthetic and various effects (currents, bubbles, steam) are pleasing to the eye. Gameplay consists mostly of basic sidescrolling and swimthrough-hoops racing, but as with most Disney games, fans of the film will appreciate it more. I Andrew Pfister



PLAYERS 1 DEV TRAVELLERS TALES REL AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN U.K.

NOT AS GOOD AS: DONKEY KONG COUNTRY WAIT FOR IT. THE INCREDIBLES (THE MOVIE)

### LIENS VS. PREDATOR VE'RE ALL ALIENS...ON THE INSIDE

TEEN | YROX [REVIEWED] | PSO

The grass is greener on the other side, but getting there is a bitch. Aliens Vs. Predator: Extinction pits humans against aliens against predators-none of whom will be able to move from A to B without first detouring to C, D, and E-in a fine but flawed real-time strategy game based on two film universes.

Players pick a race in one of three multimission campaigns, and Extinction does a fine job of balancing its participants. Humans can access powerful weapons and upgrades to make up for their lack of physical strength, predators use cloaking technology to sneak up on foes, and aliens can kill and





impregnate different hosts to create all kinds of units. With the sides properly equalized, management of resources and strategy quite rightly dominates.

Extinction stumbles over some

important ground, though, marring what would otherwise be an excellent title. Massed troops can be quickly selected and sent to specific destinations, but invariably, some units get split off from the group and wander aimlessly. Separated targets are easy pickings, and players are forced to frantically attempt to rejoin their forces while simultaneously cursing the poor pathfinding A.I. It's also hard to fathom why Extinction so gleefully embraces such RTS staples as fog of war; it might be applicable for the aliens, but surely both the high-technologyemploying humans and predators can whip up radar and spy satellites. Uninspired level design rounds out the package, with the designers relying far too much on impassable mountain ranges and forcing players to find roundabout routes to their targets. ■ Greg Orlando





### **EVEONLINE** ADAM, WHEREFORE ART THOUS

One of the few science-fiction MMORPGs in a market overly saturated with fairies and wizards, Eve Online promised a breath of fresh air but ends up being little more than an exercise in monotony. It is the epitome of wasted potential, with beautiful graphics, rich sounds, and some good ideas, all of which come to nothing due to unfocused gameplay, a poor interface, and its tedious nature.

Character generation is probably the most fun you'll have with Eve There are many options available, 12 subraces. Your character's look is also highly customizable, endearing the game to you early on

Unfortunately, the fun factor you start playing. The tutorial is bad, the manual is nearly worthless, and the clunky interface requires too many lanything. And once you figure out how things work, you begin mining. You



can afford a decent ship or skill upgrade that allows you to survive encounters with anything tougher than training drones

When you finally get into battles, watch combat wasn't worth the accomplishment or purpose in anything you do. Eve has some good ideas, such as player-formed corporations, skill training when you aren't logged on, dynamic economies, and a reputation and bounty system that regulates player killing. None of **I**€ Di Luo

PUB SIMON & SCHUSTER PRICE \$38.99 PLAYERS 1-LOTS OF PEOPLE **BEV CCP GAMES** REI AVAILABLE NOW **ICELAND** 

RETTER THAN, EARTH AND REYOND NOT AS GOOD AS: MOST MMORPGs WAIT FOR IT: ANARCHY ONLINE: SHADOWLANDS



XB PC

PS2

GC





# STAR WARS: K.O.T.O.R.

ROLE-PLAY, YOU WILL

TEEN | XBOX

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS
DEVELOPER: BIOWARE
PRICE-\$49.99
RELEASE JULY 2003
PLAYERS. 1
ORIGIN: CANADA

Let's establish something straight away—Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic is the best thing to happen to the Star Wars franchise since The Empire Strikes Back. BioWare has taken its peerless RPG experience, injected it with an awe-inspiring old-school Star Wars milieu, and crafted one of the best role-playing games of all time.

But what makes KOTOR so good in an age of Final Fantasys and Suikodens? Oh, young Padawan, let us count the ways.

### 1) The game is enormous.

While this is not always a good thing (some RPGs, like *Dragon Warrior VII*, outstay their welcome), in *KOTOR*'s case it's fantastic because you never want the game to end. It's 10 hours before you see so much as a Jedi, and by the time you become one, you've barely begun. Not only is the game physically huge (you star-hop across a half-dozen planets, including Tatooine, Dantooine, and the Wookiee planet Kashyyykl, but the sheer number of quests, miniquests, and sub-mini-sidequests is also seemingly endless.

### 2) There's never a dull moment.

Unlike many RPGs, in which the obligatory fetch quests make you feel like King Arthur's paperboy, KOTOR's quests are consistently engaging, involving, and downright fun. Mission objectives range from the usual seek-and-retrieve jobs to innovative Hardy Boys—esque murder

mysteries that put your fledgling Jedi mind powers to the test.

### 3) The battle system rocks.

Not quite real-time, not quite turnbased, but somewhere in-between, KOTOR's battle engine offers tremendous depth while being intimately adjustable. During combat, when the hazy chaos of flashing lightsabers might cause lesser games to choke, KOTOR lets gamers switch between characters (up to three in your party), target different enemies, and select from a multitude of offensive and defensive attacks, powers, or item management options. Your support characters can also be fine-tuned with differing tactical algorithms to suit the



### WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

KOTOR offers a tangibly LIGHT SIDE different experience depending on which side of the Force you walk. Dark side followers are stronger but have weaker healing powers, while Light side abilities are quite the opposite.





DARK SIDE





### DREAM TEAM

Who you put in your posse can directly affect your experience in KOTOR. GMR gives you the lowdown on the choicest people you'll want to hang with.

### Carth



Carth's good at putting holes in folks, whether he's using a rifle or doing it John Woo-style with two pistols.

### Bastila



While she's a total jerk, her Force powers and healing abilities are essential during tougher fights.

### HK-47



Funny, malicious, and deadly, HK-47 is a valuable asset in your party. His droid skills also come in handy.

### Canderous



This no-nonsense tough guy is like Dirty Harry in metallic pantaloons. His self-healing powers are a bonus.

### → Side guests are the best way to earn extra experience, money, armor, weapons, and supplies in KOTOR. Try to complete every possible side quest you can. They're all profitable and fun!



### TIME TO PLAY

Adventuring isn't the only thing you get to do in KOTOR. Sometimes, you get to blow crap up via the Skywalkerish star fighter sequences. You can also play a blackjack-esque game of Pazaak, or try to beat the game's fastest times in Swoop Racing. 16

### STARFIGHTER



### PAZAAK



### SWOOP RACING



situation. The actual statistical details (saving throws, plus/minus attributes) that make BioWare's other games so deep are all handled in an efficient behind-the-scenes manner, making actual gameplay a no-headaches breeze.

### 4) Customization is king.

Every one of the endless body, head, hand, arm, belt, weapon, and implant accessories found in the game reflects (when equipped) on the actual character models. That's cool.

### 5) You choose your own path.

Whether you choose to walk the path of the light side or the dark side, the choice is always yours. The ramifications of this decision affect your efficiency in all sorts of ways. Dark followers are lousy at healing spells but more powerful, while light-side acolytes are challenged and rewarded in other ways. Repeated plays of this game are essential.

### 6) Superior script and voice acting.

Whether you opt to exploit the conversational and superbly written script or just cut the dialogue short, there is no wasted effort here. Unlike many RPGs, in which NPCs usually offer one or two lines of trite conversation, in KOTOR. every word counts.

Sure, KOTOR has some issues, like irritating loading times, a lack of variety among NPC character models, and lots of running around. And the graphics,

while structurally impressive, could use an extra lick of paint. But even in a field thick with contenders, Knights of the Old Republic reigns supreme. It redefines what the genre is capable of-a testament to it's beauty, diversity, and absolute replayability. Epic in scope and built to last, KOTOR is everything you'd ever want in a Star Wars game.



BEST RPG SINCE, SKIES OF ARCADIA WAIT FOR IT: TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE

### 2ND OPINION

It looks like the delaus were worth It, because KOTOR Is

absolutely fantastic. I've always enloyed Japanese APGs like Final Fantasu and Chrono Cross, but It's refreshing to see a console APG just as good. If not better. come from the West And the story buts recent Square games to shame You must buy. 1€ Andrew Pfister





# **GBA** REVIEW

THIS MONTH. WE REVISIT THE GOLDEN AGE OF ARCADE QUARTER MUNCHERS AND THE JOY OF RIDING IN TAXIS

## CRAZY TAXI: CATCH A RIDE SHE DRIVES ME CRAZY

EVERYONE | GBA

THQ's Crazy Taxi: Catch a Ride manages to cram both cities, all four drivers, and the Crazy Box challenges from the original Dreamcast Crazy Taxi into one Game Boy Advance cartridge. That's pretty impressive. However, it's missing the original game's great controls and sense of speed, rendering all that other good stuff a wasted effort. A slow, tedious Crazy Taxi game isn't Crazy Taxi at all, and it's definitely not worth your money.

Again, things start out well. The GBA port retains the familiar special moves—Crazy Drift, Limiter Cut—and the first few fares go smoothly. Run into a complex route, though, and suddenly, the controls aren't up to the task.

A few factors are at fault here. One, the framerate is choppy, which kills the sensation of speed and hampers turning precision. Two, the collision detection is thoroughly wonky. Racking up combos in traffic is impossible when you can't tell whether you'll bump into that oncoming semi. Three, the D-pad steering handles like an Isuzu NPR in reverse. If the collision boxes don't get you, the digital controls will.

Aside from the controls, Catch a Ride has a lot going for it. Its architecture is faithful to the arcade version, it links fares together well, it's not bad as visual quality goes, and the system's audio limitations do the game a favor, replacing the infamous Offspring tunes with tolerable instrumentals. But Crazy Taxi can't work without spot-on controls and blistering speed, and those are nowhere to be found. If \_\_Dave Smith









# SEGA ARCADE GALLERY EROM WAY BACK IN THE DAY

EVERYONE GBA

There's something to be said for being older. Growing up during the '70s and '80s provided many benefits, KC and The Sunshine Band being one of them. But if disco wasn't your bag, there were always videogames. Sure, Asteroids and Ms. Pac-Man were fun for a while, but it wasn't until games started moving into the foreground that things really took off.

Sega Arcade Gallery's four games—Outrun, Afterburner, Super Hang-On, and Space Harrier—were all developed by Sega's premier arcade games developer, AM2 (which stood for Arcade Machines 2nd division). Headed by the legendary Yu Suzuki, AM2 paved the way for neo-3D games by hurling the player into an onrushing, scrolling foreground. Outrun pulverizes Pole Position, sending you racing through checkpoints in a Ferrari with a blonde riding shotgun and "Magical Sound Shower" blasting from the radio. Afterburner puts you in the cockpit of a jet fighter, with an unlimited amount of Vulcan ammo and a grip of heat-seeking missiles at the ready. Super Hang-On puts knees on the street as racers experience the thrills of motorycle racing like never before. And Space Harrier, a game that has influenced scores of more-recent shooters (like Panzer Dragoon and Rez) is back, with our hero running and flying through the skies on his trusty jetpack, shooting down Easter Island heads and malevolent dragon bosses.

The games survive in excellent fashion on GBA, with sharp colors and fast framerates. Sure, some of the games seem a lot harder than they used to be (cough, *Outrun*, cough), but for quick on-the-go gaming, this collection has clearly stood the test of time. **I** — **James Mielke** 





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SOUL CALIBUR II 083

+ EGM's Shawn Elliott wants you to play better Soul Calibur

TOP 10 TIPS. A.I. 086

088

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# SOUL CALIBUR II WELCOME TO FIGHT CLUB

### TOMORROW'S BATTLE IS WON DURING TODAY'S PRACTICE.

Proficiency in the basics of dueling is essential. In fact, it might be even more essential than encyclopedic knowledge of your character's attacks. You can enclose yourself in a cage of saber strokes and still perish if you don't have these fundamentals down pat. To that effect, make perfecting these basics your first priority before moving on to your own patented brand of death dealing.

### **GUARD IMPACT**

One should make his decisions within the space of seven breaths.

The guard impact is so essential to Soul Calibur II mastery that the premier fraternity of players named its website after the move (take a peep at www.guardimpact.com). Where most fighters rely on canned reversals to regain the initiative, SC2's alternative is elegant in its simplicity. By pressing Back and Block, any contender can deflect an incoming thrust, opening up his or her opponent to retaliation. Timing is crucial, and there's a heavy price to pay for poorly timed or predictable parrying. The strategy doesn't stop there, though. Although your

foe is open to attack once you've blunted his strike, he can still flip the script with a quard impact of his own (in fact, skilled players can exchange timed parries in a cinematic stalemate of clashing swords). If you're serious about

rethinking your scrubby ways, try setting up your A.I. sparring partner so he counterattacks all hits, forcing you to complete the cycle or take one in the face. Practice, of course, makes perfect.



### AIR CONTROL

Take arrows in your forehead, but never in your back.

In this fighting game, when someone pops you into the air, you're anything but a helpless pincushion. Simply put, air control lets you shift your weight in midair and out of alignment with your enemy's cleaver. So rather than

passively watch someone practice combos on your soon-to-be corpse, flip to safety by pressing the D-pad in the appropriate



direction. Mastering the art of air recovery can also keep you in the ring, but be warned: Overambitious usage can lead to your opponent landing even larger strings. And that's something you really don't want.

### RING DUTS

...if you are slain in battle, you should be resolved to having your corpse face the enemy.

Whining won't save you. In fact, the more bitterly you complain about ring outs, the more likely a better player will introduce you to the abyss. Your first priority is to master the terrain. If you're aware of your



surroundings, you won't have to wait till someone pushes you to the edge of the arena before sidestepping to safety. If that fails, you should be aware of your opponent's obvious ring-out attacks. Depending on where you stand in relation to the edge, he'll usually have at least one move that sends you sailing to the center of the earth. And, of course, if you can predict that move, parrying it will be that much easier. Depending on your character, you might have an attack of your own; or you might have a throw that flips your victim over your head, either reversing your positions or ejecting him from the stage altogether. Study your nemesis' favorites closely-it'll pay off.

### MIX IT UP

Become acquainted with every art,

Predictability is your worst enemy. The fact is painfully obvious, vet somehow underappreciated Let's illustrate with Voldo. The contortionist's Blind Dive move (Down Forward A + B) makes



an excellent match opener. Like a human arrow flung from a taut bow, the flying freak instantly closes the starting gap between him and his foe with a high hit. But if you foolishly persist in drawing from the same well, your opponent will wise up. In this case, all he has to do is hold Guard, and you'll land helplessly in his lap. So, if you're smart, you'll turn his expectations against him and hit low on the next opening. The same goes for any rush: The trick is to establish a pattern so the opposition thinks he's got you pegged—then you can draw on different attacks that hit in a pattern contrary to what he's expecting (e.g., instead of a high, low combo, use one that goes low, then high). He'll never see it coming.

XB

PS<sub>2</sub>



### COMBOS AND CUSTOM STRINGS

You can prevent your opponent from defeating you through defense, but to win you must kick ass.

Now that you've built a repertoire of basic skills, it's time to showboat. Any one of the attack strings listed here can shrivel a victim's confidence faster than an appearance on the Springer Show, but they should still be used sparingly (you were

paying attention to our sermon on predictability, right?]. Note that what you see here is by no means comprehensive. Unfortunately, our advertising deals with Craftmatic Adjustable Beds fell through,

and we couldn't afford the page space to catalog them all. I

Diagonally Down Forward B; Back A, B

When opponent is backed up against a wall: Forward, Forward K; B (Hold); B + K; Back, Back, K Back A, B

SPAWN

ΧB

PS2

GC

B, B, K; Forward K; Forward K; Forward K; B

B, B, K; B, B, Up; Down + K

8WR Up B; B, B, K

Wall Move: Forward, Forward, B + K (Hold)

TALIM

A, B, Back A + B; B + K; B, A, A

A, B, Back A + B; 8WR Up or Down A, A, A

A, B, Back A + B: 8WR Up or Down A, B

8WR Diagonally Up K; B + K; B, A, A

Wall Moves: A + B (Hold)

From Possession Stance - Move sideways into wall; A, B, or K

TΔKI









Diagonally Back Down K; Down A+ K; K; Down A + B

Back B (Hold); Down (Roll onto belly); A; B; B + K

> Wall Moves: From Mantis Crawl -Back into wall **Diagonally Down** Forward A + B (Hold)

VOLDO

A; Up B + K

8WR Up or Down B (Hold); A; B

> 8WR Up or Down B (Hold); A: Back B + K

Diagonally Down Forward B; A; Diagonally Down Back B, B

Diagonally Down Forward B; Forward B, Forward B, B, B

RAPHAEL

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PC Gamer (77%)

TEXERACTION .



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# A.I. HIS CODES ARE REAL, BUT HE IS NOT

There's a good chance you've seen The Hulk in theaters by now. Whether you liked it is a different matter, but the game certainly has its share of smashing. When you get tired of breaking things, check out our stamina builder for Brute Force or bust a few tricks with Shaun Palmer in Wakeboarding Unleashed. Anything to pass the time until Vivendi Universal can render us an interactive Jennifer Connelly.







### **02** BRUTE FORCE HBOX



It's not Bungie's epic, but in a year without Halo 2, Brute Force is king. Although this tip is technically not a code, it will greatly increase your enjoyment of the game. There's a direct relation between your characters' stamina bars and what they're doing. The more active they are, the longer it will take to recover their stamina and use their special moves. For example, if Tex does nothing but run, it will take him more than four minutes to completely recover. But by simply crouching in place (click and hold the left thumbstick). Tex's bar will recharge in only 30 seconds. Order your squad to take a knee after a battle and you'll be able to use its abilities three times more often than normal.

### OT GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY PO

Give PC brethren their due. While console owners were tearing up the streets in stolen cars and shooting innocent bystanders, PC gamers were patiently waiting for their turn. Now their time has come—and, appropriately, they can cheat just as hard as console fans. Enter these codes during gameplay.

All Light Weapons
All Medium Weapons
All Heavy Weapons
Full Health
Full Armor
Suicide
Raise Wanted Level
Decrease Wanted Level
Women Follow You
Smoke a Cigarette
Tommy Gains Weight

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

Tommy Becomes Effeminate

Change Skin/Clothing Play as Ricardo Diaz Play as Lance Vance

Play as Ken Rosenberg

Play as Hilary King

Play as Love Fist Member Jezz Torent

Play as Love Fist Member Dick

Play as Phil Cassidy Play as Sonny Forelli

Play as Mercedes

Spawn a Rhino

Spawn a Bloodring Banger

Spawn a Bloodring Banger #2 Spawn a Sabre Turbo

Spawn a Sabre Turbo Spawn a Hotring Racer **THUGSTOOLS PROFESSIONALTOOLS NUTTERTOOLS ASPIRINE** PRECIOUSPROTECTION **ICANTTAKEITANYMORE** YOUWONTTAKEMEALIVE LEAVEMEALONE **FANNYMAGNET** CERTAINDEATH **DEEPFRIEDMARSBARS PROGRAMMER** STILLLIKEDRESSINGUP **CHEATSHAVEBEENCRACKED** LOOKLIKELANCE MYSONISALAWYER LOOKLIKEHILARY ROCKANDROLLMAN WELOVEOURDICK **ONEARMEDBANDIT IDONTHAVETHEMONEYSONNY FOXYLITTLETHING** PANZER **TRAVELINSTYLE GETTHEREQUICKLY GETTHEREFAST GETTHEREVERYFASTINDEED** 

Spawn a Hotring Racer #2 Spawn a Romero's Hearse Spawn Love Fist's Limo Spawn a Trashmaster Spawn a Caddy Nearby Cars Explode Aggressive Drivers All Cars Turn Pink All Cars Turn Black Cars Can Fly Perfect Handling All Traffic Lights Are Green Cars Gain Hovercraft Technology Cars Become Invisible Except for Wheels Sports Cars Have Big Wheels Pedestrians Get in Your Car Sunny Weather **Light Clouds** Foggy Weather Stormy Weather Accelerate Game Clock Accelerate Game Decelerate Game Pedestrians Riot Pedestrians Hate You Pedestrians Carry Guns

Girls Carry Guns

**GETTHEREAMAZINGLYFAST THELASTRIDE** ROCKANDROLLCAR RUBBISHCAR BETTERTHANWALKING BIGBANG MIAMITRAFFIC AHAIRDRESSERSCAR **IWANTITPAINTEDBLACK** COMEFLYWITHME GRIPISEVERYTHING GREENLIGHT SEAWAYS WHEELSAREALLINEED LOADSOFLITTLETHINGS HOPINGIRL **ALOVELYDAY APLEASANTDAY** CANTSEEATHING CATSANDDOGS LIFEISPASSINGMEBY ONSPEED BOOOOOORING **FIGHTFIGHTFIGHT NOBODYLIKESME OURGODGIVENRIGHTTOBEARARMS** CHICKSWITHGUNS

### **⊌ MORE**

### 03 THE HULK GC, PSZ, XBOX



Go to Code Input at the Options screen and enter these to play with Bruce Banner's DNA. Then select them from the Cheat menu.

Invincibility

GMMSKIN

Faster Regeneration

FLSHWND

Full Rage Meter

ANGMNGT
Unlimited Continues

GRNCHTR

Unlock All Levels

TRUBLVR

Wicked Punch/One-Hit Kills

FSTOFRY.

OA JURASSIC PARK: D.G.



If the dinos in Operation Genesis are kicking Jurassic, enter these babies to make them more manageable. Or if you just want to see them rampage and kill, we can hook you up, too. All of these are entered during gameplay.

Heatwave

Tap R1 + Down twice. \$250,000

L1, Right, Right, L1, R1, Down Fossil Restocking

L1 + R1 + Down

Select Dig Sites Without Stars

Left, Down, Right, Up, L1 + R1, L1 + R1
Park Rating Increases

Right, L1, Up, L1, L1, Down

Dinosaurs Gain Perfect Immunity
Hold L1 + R1 and repeatedly tap Up

during gameplay.

Dinosaurs Get Sick

Down, Up, Down, Left, R1, R1, R1

Carnivore Rampage

L1, L1, L1, Left, Left, Left

Michael Crichton – Excavated DNA Becomes 100 percent

R1, Up, R1, Right, L1, Down

Deus Rex Machina - Excavated DNA

Becomes 0 percent

L1, R1, L1, Right, Down, R1

All Research

Down, Down, Down, Left, Right, L1,

Down, Up

05 DONKEY KONG



→ Go to the File Selection screen and move the icon down to the Erase command at the bottom. Hold Select and then punch in B, A, R1, R1, A, L1, L1 (OK, so it doesn't quite spell "barrel" — but we applaud Nintendo nonetheless!. Diddy will say "Not bad" to confirm. Start your game and you'll have 50 men.

O6 BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS



If you don't know how to doubleclutch or frequently confuse engine retarder brakes with the horrible animation system in Daikatana, these codes are for you. Enter them at the Cheat menu.

10 Million Dollars
LOTSAMONEY
Unlimited Time
PUBLICTRANSPORT
Unlock All Cheats
CHEATINGMUTHATRUCKER

Level Select

LAZYPLAYER

07 SILENT HILL 3 PSE



leaners:

"GMR" shirt GMR (USA)

So, you fancy the punk-rock GMR shirt that Heather (Silent Hill 3 heroine) is wearing and want to know how to get one for yourself? Well, in real life, you can't, but in the context of the game, you can. Here's what to do. Finish the game once and an Extra Costume mode appears at the Start-up screen menu. Select this mode and then enter the code GMRownzjoo (which is case sensitive).

OR WAKEBOARDING

UNLEASHED PS2, XBOX



There's nothing like a quick spin on the lake in the middle of summer. But if your legs are too weak to handle a board, use these codes for additional fun in the sun. Enter at the Main menu.

Unlock All Boarders
Both Systems: Spin the right analog

stick 15 times Level Select

Xbox: X, X, X, X, B, B, B, B, B, Y, Y, Y, Y, X, B, Y

PS2: Square, Square, Square, Square, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Square, Circle, Triangle

Second and Third Boards

Both Systems: Up, Up, Left, Left, Right, Right, Down, Down, Up, Left, Right,

Down, Up, Left, Right, Down

Ultimate Cheat: All Boards (including the Jet Board), All Challenges Finished, All Stats Maxed Out, All Hidden Characters Playable

Both Systems: Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right 09 SONIC ADVENTURE DX



Sonic Adventure DX has a score of minigames in it, and each of those games has a level select. Here's the breakdown.

Sonic Chaos

Wait until "Press Start" appears at the minigame Title screen, then press Up, Up, Up, Up, Right, Left, Right, Left, Start. Sonic Labyrinth

Wait until "Press Start" appears at the minigame Title screen, then press Up, Up, Right, Right, Right, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down, Left, Left, Left, Left, Left, Left, Left, Left, Left.

XB

PC

PSZ.

**GBA** 

GC

Sonic the Hedgehog 2

Tails blinks his eyes three times at the Title screen. Hold **Down/Left + A + B** and press Start just when he closes his eyes on the third blink.

10 MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER PSE



Running out of Mace? Check out the codes below. Note that you must have the Electro-Cosh selected at the Weapon Selection screen.

Invincibility

L1, R1, L1, R1, X, Circle, Circle, X, Square, Triangle

**Unlimited Ammunition** 

L1, R1, L1, R1, X, Circle, Circle, X, Square, Square

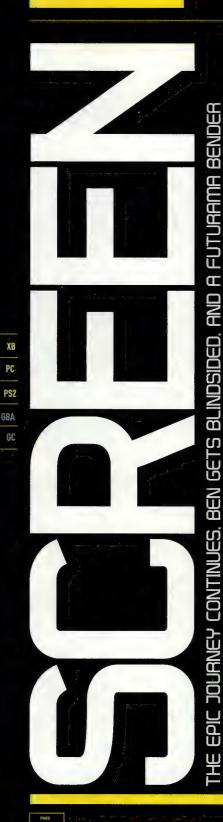
Level Select

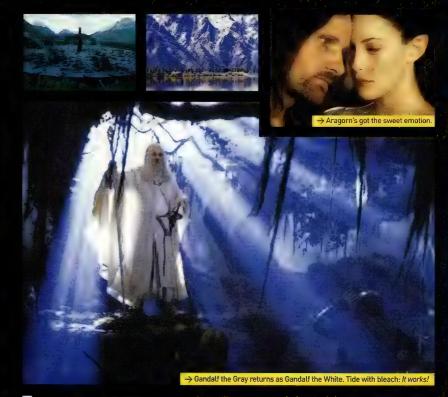
L1, R1, L1, R1, X, X, Circle, Circle, Square,

One-Hit Kills

L1, R1, L1, R1, X, Circle, Circle, X, X, X Enemy Auto-Focus

L1, R1, L1, R1, X, Circle, Circle, X, Circle, X





# LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

RATED PG-13 | 175 MINUTES | 2 DISCS | DIRECTED BY PETER JACKSON

This is what moviemaking is all about. Truly diehard fans will moan about the liberties taken with Tolkien's masterpiece, but if there is any doubt in your mind that these are three of the greatest hours in movie history, well, we hope you get eaten by an orc.

Picking up right where The Fellowship of the Ring left off, The Two Towers splits its narrative between the Mordor-bound Frodo and Sam, along with most of the rest of the gang, who are dealing with malevolent forces at the other tower, Isengard—home of good-guy-gone-bad Saruman. Finally, Merry and Pippin meet Middle-earth's oldest inhabitants, the Ents, and get in some quality tree hugging.

Director Peter Jackson's vision of this—the second part of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy—is epic in every sense of the word. The

casting is note-perfect across the board. Special mention to Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn, whose slow but sure transformation from mysterious drifter to king (we don't think I'm giving anything away here) is pained, somewhat reluctant, yet inevitably triumphant in a genuinely human way. Elijah Wood (playing Frodo so well that he was surely a hobbit in a previous life) leaves us in no doubt of the huge burden of the One Ring. Finally, he may just be ones and zeros, but Gollum takes the award for most lifelike pixels ever-honorable mention to Andy Serkis for his movements on which the CGI is based.

Countless New Zealand locations bring Middle-earth to life so well that it's almost tempting to believe that Tolkien based parts of his fictional account on these actual places.

The Two Towers' scale is huge,

but in so many ways, it's the attention to tiny details that sets this movie apart from the rest. As the saying goes, "The devil is in the details." Inlays on weapons, edging on tunics, and the hair on hobbits' oversized feet all combine to create a remarkably real world. Sauron would be proud.

And one of the most bloody, bone-splintering scenes ever— a few hundred elves and men versus about a bazillion orcs at the Battle of Helm's Deep—provides the perfect example of a movie with a creative team at the top of its game. Roll on, part three.

Special features: Top marks. The second (extras) DVD includes two documentaries, eight featurettes on various aspects of the movie, previews of *The Return of the King* videogame and movie, trailers, and a music video.









### DAREDEVIL JUST MISSES THE MARK

2 DISCS | DIRECTED BY MARK STEVEN JOHNSON

Daredevil is the latest Marvel superhero to get the big-screen treatment, and, while this movie has its moments, something gets lost in the translation.

The Daredevil comic-book character has a little more subtlety, depth, and darkness than, say, Spider-Man or The Hulk, and Director Mark Steven Johnson does a perfectly good lif not greatl job of transferring these qualities to our onscreen Daredevil, all the time delivering the necessary thrills and jokes. Not to mention an engaging story.

Ben Affleck makes a pretty damn good superhero, but it's Colin Farrell who steals the show as Bullseye—so named for his ability to throw anything, even a paper clip...fatally! Sound ridiculous? Well, it is. But it's thoroughly entertaining nonetheless.

Special features: An excellent package on these two discs. Too many extras to mention them all, but highlights include director's commentary, onscreen trivia track, making-of features, screen tests, and the HBO First Look.

# FUTURAMA - VOL. 2 THE FUTURE IS NOW. TODAY!



Boasting 19 episodes on four discs, this Volume 2 DVD set is quality in quantity. Fans seem to agree that *Futurama*'s second season is the strongest and funniest. We're inclined to believe them.

It's tempting to view Futurama as a poor man's Simpsons, but that does it a disservice. Like The Simpsons, Futurama has a seemingly endless supply of sharp, satirical humor, but it distinguishes itself with inventive characters and story lines and countless moments that are literally laugh-out-loud funny.

Fox has put the show on hold, so Futurama's future is uncertain. Whatever happens, it's going to be a long time before this volume loses its shine.

Special features: Commentaries for every episode, deleted scenes, concept art, videogame trailer, and animatics (early production version in raw black/white with little animation) for one episode, which gives insight into the creative process. ■

FUTURAMA: VOLUME 2 □ FOX HOME VIDEO □ CRERTED BY. MATT GROENING □ DISCS: 4 □ EPISODES: 19

PC PS2



# DERGAMESNEEDPLAYIN', TOO GMAPROVIDESAGOOD LIT

PS2

### RSERK: GUTS' RAGE 'S IN THE WAY THAT YOU USE IT

DREAMCAST | MARCH 2000

2D beat-em-ups of the hack-nslash variety pretty much peaked around the time of Sega's Guardian Heroes, But the first real next-gen 3D action game of that style to make any impact was Sword of the Berserk for Dreamcast, Based on the manga by Kentaro Miura, the game opens a window into the world of Guts, the sword-swinging berserker mercenary.

Unlike most games of this nature, including North American publisher Eidos' own Fighting Force, Berserk actually had a strong story line and equally strong voice acting to support it (vocal chores were handled by the

respected Soul Reaver actors). Now, all Berserk needed was some hectic action to fill things out, and it had it in spades.

Whether you were using something from Guts' arsenal of crossbow bolts, explosives, and throwing knives, or his arm cannon, you were never short of offensive options. But the real fun was in using Guts' Dragonslayer broadsword, which would make some of the most intimidating sounds ever heard in a videogame (along with the chopping heads off part). The good news is that the developer, Yukes, is currently working on a sequel for PS2.

■ James Mielke





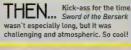


→ If you own a Dreamcast and don't already have this excellent hackn-slash game. look high and low for it-it's worth the effort.

NOW Kick-ass now, it's worth picking up a copy of the game. It still looks good and plays well. A fantastic action game. OBTAINABLE





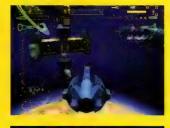


Kick-ass for the time,



PLAYSTATION | 1998





-> Few console games at the time effectively evoked the wonder of deep-space combat. Ships, stars, and nebulae of all sizes made space a whole lot more interesting than the standard black fare.





→ Vengeance features an array of deadly fighters; outfitted with missiles, particle cannons, and the ever-nifty grappling gun

### VY WARS GOD! IT'S FULL OF STARS!

In its time, U.K.-based Psygnosis was one of the industry's shining stars, a small, style-savvy developer with a pint-sized portfolio of titles, several unrivaled in their respective genres. While its superlative WipeOut series (deservedly) received the lion's share of attention, Colony Wars was one of the finest deep-space shooters to be enjoyed by the PlayStation generation.

The sequel, dubbed Vengeance, perfected the formula established by its predecessor: gorgeous graphics, compelling physics, a tactile sense of control, and a deliciously ambiguous story line (player's allegiances flipflopped between the first and second games) featuring sophisticated sci-fi of the coldest, driest sort. Colorful clusters of stars and brilliant nebulae filled the

sky, giving the genre a much needed graphical kick in the pants. And rather than being part of a simplistic universe, the player was immersed in a massive world teeming with capitol ships, alien aggressors, and political intrigue.

Players could enjoy an impressive array of mission types in true 3D (as opposed to Rogue Squadron's more polar physics), including defending bases, mining for ore, towing leaky reactors, and stealing alien fighters, all nicely counterbalanced with a hefty dose of dogfighting.

Psygnosis hit hard times with the departure of key players, and a third Wars, called Red Sun, was aborted. It was later picked up and distributed by Midway; the result was noteworthy only for it's limited distribution run.

■ David Chen

NOW Holds up remarkably west. predecessor are fairly easy to find, and they at a reasonable price. EASY TO FIND

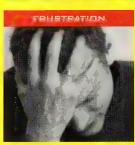
THEN With 40 challenging missions spanning 19 acts and six possible endings, Vengeance gave starfighters a lot of bang for their buck.





### WELCOME TO THE GAMING CYCLE









\*DISCOVER THE CURE FOR BOREDOM.

WE SELL THOUSANDS

OF 100% GUARANTEED

PREOWNED GAMES.







→ Tough-guy A.I., big boss battles, and a befuddled cop named Barney. What's missing? Not much at all, really.



### HALF-LIFE BEST PC GAME EVER

Since everybody and their grandma are waiting for Half-Life 2 (and if you're not, go to the blackboard and write "I am not a gamer" 1,000 times), we thought it was high time to revisit the original. Actually, anytime would be a good time to go back to Half-Life because it still plays great. Just as Orson Welles created one of the classics of American cinema with his first film, Citizen Kane, Valve Software created one of the landmarks of digital entertainment with its first game.

This is no exaggeration. No one had seen anything like *Citizen Kane* when it came out, and the same can be said of *Half-Life*. It's so smartly entertaining and superior to anything else around it that it has not aged at all. If anything, it's more amazing now because it's clear upon replaying it that no PC shooter

created in the five years since its release has beaten it. (Although some, like *Medal of Honor* and *No One Lives Forever*, have been great.)

So, why is Half-Life so great? There are a million reasons, but you can boil them down to one word: tension. From the moment you boot up the game, Half-Life plunges you into its nightmarish world, and it never lets up. Nothing takes you out of the story—no cut-scenes, no load screens, no mission briefings. The story plays out as you experience it, through a then-innovative and brilliant use of scripted events that are triggered as you progress. (Yeah, everyone does it now, but Half-Life was one of the first.)

The game's pacing and level design are masterful, giving you something new and unexpected around every corner, combining standard FPS battles with genuine

brainwork and puzzle solving. Even the bosses rule. They are usually visible way before you can beat them, making the payoff that much more cathartic when you finally do succeed. And it is a particularly perverse bit of genius that some of the game's scariest moments are provided by the tiniest and weakest monsters—those infernal headcrabs.

Upon its release, Half-Life instantly made every other first-person shooter either already out or still in development instantly dated and irrelevant. Five years later, it is still the shooter by which all others are measured, still the one most developers don't have a clue how to equal. If you can't understand all the fuss and hype over Half-Life 2, go back and play the original. Then start drooling with anticipation like the rest of us.

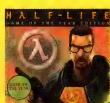
I€\_Jeff Green

A genuine masterpiece that still plays better than 99 percent of the games out there, regardless of genre. Half-Life has it all: OBTAINABLE

GMR 10<sup>/10</sup>

THEN... Half-Life blew away the entire gaming community, garnering perfect scores across the board and raising the FPS bar.





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# THE LIST

Bandar

Banda Sony Sony

Interplay

Capcom Acclaim Capcom Capcom Codemasters Konami Acclaim Konami

Acclaim

Fidos

Koei

Sony Online

Rockstar Games

Sony

300

Fidos

Sony

Sonv

Sony

Sony

Konami

Namco

Square EA

Infogrames

EA Games

**EA Sports** 

Capcom

Interplay

Konami

Bandai

Namco

Electronic Arts

Rockstar Games

Sony

Natsume

LucasArts

GMR'S EXHAUSTIVE GUIDE TO THE ONLY GAMES THAT MATTER

BUYER'S GUIDE

### PS2 TOP 100 DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY

Burnout 2: Point of Impact	
Capcom vs. SNK 2	
Chaos Legion	
Colin McRae Rally 3	
Contra: Shattered Soldier	
Crazy Taxi	
Dance Dance Revolution: DDRMax	
Dark Cloud 2	

.hack//Infection

hack//Mutation

ATV Offroad Furn Baldur's Gate: Dark Allian

PS2

Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore Deus Ex: The Conspiracy Dynasty Warriors 3 Escape from Monkey Island **EverQuest Online Adventures** 

EA Sports Final Fantasy X Square EA The Getaway Sony Gran Turismo 3 A-spec Sony Grand Theft Auto III Rockstar Games

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City **Guilty Gear XX** Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland High Heat 2004 Hitman 2 **Hot Shots Golf 3** lco

Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Leg-Jet X20 K-1 Grand Prix **Kingdom Hearts** Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Ve

Le Mans 24 Hours The Lord of the Rings: The Two To Madden NFL 2003 The Mark of Kri

MDK 2 Armageddon Medal of Honor: Frontline Metal Gear Solid 2: Substan Midnight Club 2

Maximo: Ghosts to Glory

Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs.

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The world's Could MINIOPOC that this firms the Outside for "Allies" Common world with a 1900 of the swimper design	
The world's first MMORPG, but this time the O stands for "offline." Comes packed with a DVD of the animated series.	7
We've exhausted our supply of "something within a something" jokes, so just know that the series starts to pick up in this sequel.	В
A whole slew of new artists who, naturally, bring along brand-new tunes for your button-pressing pleasure.	8
The key to being a successful ATV offroader lies in launching yourself through the air as often as possible. A fun and floaty racer.	9
A beautiful-looking Dungeons & Dragons-based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
An RPG that forces you to die and start over multiple times? It sounds ridiculous, but it actually works.	8
An aggressive driving simulator that defies the rules of physics. Includes a dedicated Crash mode for aspiring demotition-derby stars.	8
Take the best elements of Street Fighter and King of Fighters, and you'll have the best thing going in the world of 2D combat.	В
Storm through 15 levels of nonstop action, commanding various squads of bodyguards. It's like Devil May Cry, only not so antisocial.	8
A superb rally racer with superrealistic properties—right down to the extended time you spend sitting in the Ford Focus,	8
After numerous shoddy attempts to bring the classic Contra gameplay to a next-gen system, Konami finally gets it right.	9
As good as opening your PlayStation 2, rigging Dreamcast hardware inside, and then loading up a DC build of Crazy Taxi.	В
Before, if you wanted to play DDR, you had to subject yourself to Joe and Jane Public. Now, you can embarrass yourself at home.	
Improves upon the first one in every way imaginable. Building and upgrading weapons to your liking is a blast.	9
Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on bilking.	8
Before the entire series went Xbox exclusive, Team Ninja's gang of jiggly grapplers found a temporary home on PS2.	8
One of the best PC games of 2000 is ported faithfully to PS2. Upgrade your character's skills and attributes as you see fit.	8
Did you know Devil May Cry was going to be Resident Evil 4 before it was spun off into its own series? Oh, you did? Never mind, then.	9
Melee combat set to the history of ancient China. Enemies number in the hundreds along branching story paths.	8
LucasArts has a fine tradition of putting out excellent graphical adventure games, and this latest charmer is no exception.	9
PS2 owners finally get to see what the whole EverQuest thing is about—and will never be seen again.	
Minor refinements over the 2001 version may not be enough to justify the upgrade, but it's still a solid F1 game.	8
PS2's first Final Fantasy does away the traditional overworld, but introduces full voice acting. Artistically beautiful, as always.	9
Opinions vary wildly on this British-themed gangster (not gangsta) game. Even the British can't agree!	8
Core gameplay is unchanged, but the graphics get a complete overhaul, which makes 673 the best-playing/looking sim on the market.	10
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A phenomenon of both gameplay and sales. A free-roaming interactive mobster film that's sold more than 8 million copies to date As bad boy Tommy Vercetti, there's something indescribably cool about cruising Vice City's beach strip while rocking to "Bitlie Jean." Tired of waiting for Street Fighter 4? This one should more than compensate. Great visuals, great control, and great extras. After it was cancelled for Dreamcast, a console version of this PC classic didn't seem very likely. But here we are, It's a farming simulator. It's fun. These two statements may seem wildly incongruous, but somehow, Harvest Moon makes it work. The best ball game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.

Most of the problems with the original Hitman have been fixed, making this one of the more rewarding action games on PS2. Some golf games need something extra to attract gamers. How about arcade-style control, annoying taunts, and multiplayer modes? An underappreciated work of art with challenging puzzles, fantastic lighting, and engrossing character relationships The studio that gave birth to Crash Bandicoot brings a couple new mascots and a gorgeous new 3D world to PS2.

More extreme-sports fun, but this time, it's all wet. Finishing is only half the battle; performing tricks factors into the final standings. The budding sport of K1 is faithfully represented here, as are the knockout blows to the jaw that sound just as painful as they look. When the amazing, talented artists from Square join forces with the amazing, talented artists from Disney, good things happen. Klonoa became a rare find in the later days of PlayStation. The outstanding seguel looks to share the same fate. Grab it if you can.

There's an option to play the famous endurance race true-to-life: 24 hours straight of driving. Better stock up on Mountain Dew. Anything bearing the valuable Lord of the Rings license will sell well. Happily, there's more to this beat-em-up than just the name. The series' first foray into online console gaming is a success. Everything you love about Madden can now be shared with strangers A stick action game with innovative controls: Each button is assigned to a different enemy, allowing for combat with multiple targets

It's the spiritual successor to the classic Ghosts 'n' Goblins, complete with heart boxers and insane difficulty. Much improved over the original Dreamcast incarnation, MDK 2 Armageddon is one of the better recent action games. A strong single-player campaign payes the way through the beaches of Normandy and the heart of France, Great audio

There's a lot in this update: 350 VR missions, 150 alternate missions, five Snake Tales, and one skateboard. Yes, a skateboard. Rockstar's rebellious racer is now online, but you'd better practice mastering the game's controls before entering competition Giant robots are great, but basing them on the Gundam license with Capcom developing makes them greater, if that's even possible. After three attempts. Namco got it right...sort of. The realism is astounding, as long as you ignore the giant Mr. Driller



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NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate turning left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you get it, Thunder 2003 should be right up your alley.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts	Even better than the first, Vol. 2 takes you through the legendary players and teams of the NBA's storied history. A great deal of fun.	9
NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	A lot like Madden, only with exploited college kids and marching bands. It's also the best college football game available.	9
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	Strangely, the game's best version is on the least-powerful hardware. Running from cops has never been this fun, or consequence free.	9
NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NHL 2002	Electronic Arts	Hockey is played on ice, with six men trying to put a puck into the other team's goal. This is a good digital representation of that sport.	9
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	For the more discerning hockey connoisseur, NHL2K3 has made great strides since its debut on the now-defunct Dreamcast.	9
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	The effort put forward in defeating Nobunga in Onimusha has gone to waste, as he's risen from the dead and is appearing in the sequel.	8
Onimusha: Wartords	Capcom	Survival-horror with a taste for feudal Japan, gorgeous artistic design, and a whole lot more action than its Resident Evil kin.	8
RAD: Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	It's hard to go wrong with giant robots blowing stuff up, but Enix's latest effort goes one step further with a novel control scheme.	8
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Insomniac's terrific action-platformer has you jumping from world to world in search of new weapons and gadgets.	8
Rayman 2: Revolution	Ubi Soft	One of the best 3D platformers available, the Rayman franchise doesn't get the attention it deserves; it's good, and you should buy it.	9
Red Faction	THQ	A first-person shooter that features destructible environments, driveable vehicles, and a strong single-player campaign.	9
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom	More of a true sequel than Resident Evil 3, its Dreamcast debut meant many fans missed out. Problem solved!	8
Rez	Sega	A fairly standard shooter dressed as a visual and aural masterpiece. Sadly unappreciated by the vast majority of the gaming world.	8
Ridge Racer V	Namco	The always enjoyable Ridge Racer series scores well, thanks to solid control, an enthralling sense of speed, and a fitting soundtrack.	9
Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	This fun arcade racer originally started out with the NASCAR license, but it was dropped in favor of original designs.	8
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	This Greek mythology-based action game is an update of the arcade and NES classic in name only. Fun combat and great music.	9
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega	Arcade-style tennis perfection when it launched for Dreamcast. It's holding up just as well on PS2.	8
Silent Hill 2	Konamı	More creepy than downright scary, the Silent Hill series takes a more sophisticated, cerebral approach to the survival-horror genre.	8
The Sims	Electronic Arts	A new mode helps you figure out how to keep your Sim from pissing himself. Or, if you're like that, how to make him do it.	9
Sky Gunner	Atlus	If you can look past the slowdown issue (and it can be a pretty big issue at times), Sky Gunner is great shooting fun.	8
Sky Odyssey	Activision	A flight game that channels the spirit of Pilotwings, with mission-based gameplay and a large array of aircraft to pilot.	8
Sty Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	Sony	A solid platformer with a unique aesthetic and animations. Lacks a little in the challenge department; it's a little on the short side, too.	8
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar Games	In keeping with Rockstar's games, Smuggler's Run indulges the inner criminal in all of us.	8
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony	Possibly the the best reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor. The team-based military tactics work better online than off.	9
Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft	As expected, the PS2 port of the Xbox original takes a graphical hit. Doesn't mean it's not still a great game, though.	8
Spy Hunter	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
SSX	Electronic Arts	A surprisingly good snowboarder with over-the-top stunts and great course design; it stands out as one of the better PS2 launch titles.	9
SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	SSX Tricky boasts a new set of insane gravity-defying and physically impossible stunts, not to mention all-new tracks and characters.	8
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	Customizable submarines rule the waters of the future; Sub Rebellion is an action game that's short on graphics but very entertaining.	8
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	Essentially Tekken 3 with enhanced graphics and a tag-teaming. Which isn't bad, considering Tekken 3 is a great game to begin with.	8
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	Tenchu sneaked onto the list without us noticing. We were drunk on sake and telling tales of heroism, so that might be why.	8
Theme Park Roller Coaster	Electronic Arts	Sim City meets Six Flags. Design your own dangerous roller coasters without fear of getting slapped with wrongful-death lawsuits.	8
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options, including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	Cruise Tokyo's highways in search of less-than-legal street-racing action. Despite some visual issues, it's definitely worth checking out.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Neversoft dropped the 2-minute time limit in Career mode and added an array of objectives. Level design is a step up from THPS3.	9
Twisted Metal: Black	Sony	With the franchise safety out of the hands of 989 Studios, Twisted Metal makes a welcome return to its former, gruesome glory.	9
Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony	If you buy a PS2 Network Adaptor, you get it for free. Which kind of makes sense, considering you can't play it without one.	8
Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	The Virtua Fighter series has always been finely crafted, and this version is no exception. The depth of this game is staggering.	10
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	A surprisingly stellar extreme-sport title that manages to make the Tony Hawk formula work on water.	9
War of the Monsters	SCEA	King Kong's agent wanted a cool \$20 mil for this fun beat-em-up, but Sony balked and went with the less-recognizable Congar.	9
Wild Arms 3	Sony	A grand adventure with a Wild West theme, endearing characters, great music, and a refreshingly uncomplicated battle system.	8
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	The Designer's Republic touch may be missing, but the series' oft-imitated, never surpassed style of racing remains intact.	B
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega	WSB2K3 is the best-looking baseball game with a great Franchise mode, but it's got A.I. issues that need to be worked out.	8
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6	Konami	Feet down, the most natural-feeting soccer game ever. It lacks FIFA's presentation and licenses, but makes up for it in gameplay.	9
WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	THQ	Even if this game scored a zero, it would still sell a truckload of copies. Such is the marketing power of Vince McMahon & family.	8
Xenosaga	Namco	A massive RPG of epic story and length. Namco's now in charge of the Xeno series, and this is the first of many planned chapters.	9
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	l Konamı	Better enemies, better pacing, better music, better stages, and better weapons. What we're trying to say is, ZOE2 is better than the first.	8
- [OI IUI]			

[BLIYI]

### **SILENT HILL 2**

→ The first next-gen Silent Hill still impresses today with graphics that, while somewhat dated, still hold up, and a twisted plot filled with the gory thrills we've come to know and love. Not as good as Silent Hill 3, but a good precursor nonetheless.



### [HUNINI]

### **UNLIMITED SAGA**

Don't give in, you can make it. Even though it's been a while since you've played a Square game, the beautifut disaster that is *Unlimited Saga* will only leave a foul taste in your mouth. Hold out for *Final Fantasy* X-2 and XI. We believe in you.



PS2

### → PC TOP 50 A NEW NATION SHALL RISE

Battlefield 1942 EA G. Civilization III Infog Commandos 2 Eidos Day of Defeat Activ Diablo II: Lords of Destruction Blizzz Oungeon Siege Micro Enemy Engaged: Comanche v. Hokum Empi EverQuest Scars of Velious Sony EverQuest: Scars of Velious Sony F1 2002 EA S; Fallout Tactics Inter Freedom Force EA G. Freedom Force EA G. Grand Thert Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos L-2 Sturmovik Ub S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Lucas Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D.	play iames iames prames s ision iard ossoft ire Int. Online Online ports	Three completely different first-person shooters combined into one dark and terrifying gaming experience.  The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.  Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow-monster.  Multiplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles (even planes!) while battling dozens of your friends.  Sid Meier's classic just keeps rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.  Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.  You won't need to upgrade your videocard to play this teamplay-focused WWII shooter. What a refreshing concept.  The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.  Hack and stash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes, it can even be in beautiful 30 with no loading time between levels.  Extremely realistic chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.  The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.
Baldur's Gate It-Shadows of Amn Intern Black & White EA G Battlefield 1942 EA G Civilization III Infog Commandos 2 Eidos Day of Defeat Activi Diablo It-Lords of Destruction Blizza Dungeon Siege Micro Enemy Engaged: Comanche v. Hokum Empi EverQuest Sony EverQuest Sony EverQuest Sony F1 2002 EA S Fallout Tactics Intern Freedom Force EA G Freedom Force EA G Freedom Force Intern Ghost Recon: Island Thunder Ubi S Glants: Citizen Kabuto Intern Grand The't Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos IL-2 Sturmovik Ubi S Jedi Knight It-Jedi Outcast Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strate Max Payne G.O.D	play iames iames prames s ision iard ossoft ire Int. Online Online ports	The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.  Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow-monster.  Multiplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles [even planes!] while battling dozens of your friends.  Sid Meier's classic just keeps rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.  Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.  You won't need to upgrade your videocard to play this teamplay-focused WWII shooter. What a refreshing concept.  The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.  Hack and slash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes, it can even be in beautiful 3D with no loading time between levels.  Extremely realistic chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.  The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.
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Enemy Engaged: Comanche v. Hokum EverQuest Sony EverQuest-Scars of Vetious F1 2002 EA S Fallout Tactics Interpredent Freedom Force Freedom Force Freedom: Island Thunder Ghost Recon: Island Thunder Grand Prix 4 Infog Grand Theft Auto III Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Max Payne Sony Sony Hotel Sony Sony Hotel Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Max Payne G.O.D.	ore Int. Online Online Online	Extremely realistic chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger. The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.
EverQuest Sony EverQuest: Scars of Velious Sony F1 2002 EA S Fallout Tactics Inter Freedom Force EA G Freedom Force Micro Ghost Recon: Island Thunder Ubi S Giants: Citizen Kabuto Inter Grand Prix 4 Infog Grand Thert Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos IL-2 Sturrnovik Ubi S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Lucas Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	Online Online ports	The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.
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Freedom Force EA G Freelancer Micro Ghost Recon: Island Thunder Ubi S Giants: Citizen Kabuto Inter Grand Prix 4 Infog Grand Theft Auto III Rock III-2 Sturmovik Ubi S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	play	Delivers authentic yet accessible Formula One racing enjoyment for every open-wheel racing fan out there.
Freelancer Micro Ghost Recon: Island Thunder Ubi S Giants: Citizen Kabuto Inter Grand Prix 4 Infog Grand Thert Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos IL-2 Sturmovik Ubi S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D		Squad-based tactical strategy game set in the same universe as the classic Fallout RPG that sets a new standard.
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder  Glants: Citizen Kabuto  Grand Prix 4  Infog  Grand Theft Auto III  Rock  Hitman 2: Silent Assassin  Eidös  L'-2 Sturmovik  Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast  Kohan: Ahriman's Gift  Max Payne  Ubi S  Go.D.E	iames	Clever use of strategy and RPG elements help make this witty comic book superhero-themed game one of the best.
Glants: Citizen Kabuto Intern Grand Prix 4 Infog Grand Thert Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos III-2 Sturmovik Ubr S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Lucas Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	osoft	It's not as simtastic as some might expect a PC space-shooter to be, but that's part of its charm. Random missions keep the fun going.
Grand Prix 4 Infog Grand Theft Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos IL-2 Sturmovik Ubi S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	Soft	This top-notch mission pack makes a decent modern combat simulation into an outstanding one.
Grand Theft Auto III Rock Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos IL-2 Sturmovik Ubi S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	play	A shooter/strategy hybrid full of weird British humor, unique and beautiful 3D graphics, and naked lady sea monsters.
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Eidos IL-2 Sturmovik Ubi S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	rames	It's a tough choice for Formula One fans; GP4 and F1 2002 are both worthy of your hard-earned dollars.
IL-2 Sturmovik Ub S Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast Luca Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strat Max Payne G.O.D	star Games	The poster child for all that's wrong in gaming is chock full of all that's fun in gaming. And you get to import your own MP3s.
Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast     Luca       Kohan: Ahriman's Gift     Strate       Max Payne     6.0.0	s	An almost-perfect blend of action and stealth, it's a humongous improvement over the first game.
Kohan: Ahriman's Gift Strate Max Payne G.O.D.	Soft	Amazingly realistic WWII flight sim covering a region seldom visited in computer games: the Eastern Front
Max Payne G.O.D	sArts	Yeah, the lightsaber battles are sweet, but Lando's cameo just about seals the deal. And is his ship fly or what?
	tegy First	Surprisingly accessible fantasy-themed real-time strategy that's as much fun in single player as it is against other mages online.
Medal of Honor- Allied Assault FA G	D.	Despite some corny writing, this überhip noir videogame feels like a movie, but plays like a great action game.
Droit of Honor Paris	ames	Worth it just for the incredibly intense D-Day mission that almost matches the same scene in Saving Private Ryan.
Medieval: Total War Activ	rision	The ultimate historical strategy game has everything from political intrigue to sweeping real-time battles.
Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002 Micro	osoft	The definitive civilian flight simulator. So authentic, actual airline pilots use it to keep their skills sharp.
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind Beth	esda	The definitive, open-ended RPG epic, Sort of like GTA3, but with magic and elves and all that D&D flava.
Motocross Madness 2 Micro	osoft	It's mud-splattering, off-road supercross fun with this free-wheeling dirt bike simulator from the makers of ATV Offroad Fury.
Myth III: The Wolf Age G.O.D	D.	Bungie's renowned magical real-time strategy title goes 3D and maintains its fantastic multiplayer reputation.
		It's the final installment of the series, and it's also the best. There's not much new, but everything's been tweaked to near-perfection.
Neverwinter Nights Infog		If you're a D&D nerd, then you already know, but buy this one especially for the multiplayer and user-made mods.
		Austin Powers ain't got nothing on Cate Archer, the hottest digital chick with a gun since that old hag Lara Croft.
A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR		As funny and stylish as the original '60s spy spoof (if that's even possible) and more fun to play, too.
	emasters	The first in the highly original series of combat sims, this soldier/flight/tank sim went on to win CGW's 2001 Game of the Year award.
		Letting you play as the bad guys is the sure way into our hearts. Especially when they're nasty Rooskies.
		Features and content worthy of a brand-new game, this is a benchmark expansion for a classic overlooked game.
Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield Ubi S		The command interface and character A.I. have been revamped, but it runs slowly on anything but a high-end rig.
Rise of Nations Micro		It's not the greatest RTS game we've played, but the nation-building aspect makes Rise of Nations especially appealing.
Sacrifice Inter		Action/strategy hybrid defies the conventions of all the genres it touches, while making for a fantastically original multiplayer experience
Serious Sam G.O.D		Brainless running and gunning is an underappreciated way to waste a couple hours with a great-looking game.
Shadowbane Ubi S		Because of these silly things called laws, the only way we can attack and capture neighboring cities is through Shadowbane. Look out.
		Sim Golf will have you laying out golf courses and building resorts like a virtual Robert Trent Jones.
	- 1	It's impossible to categorize EA's addictive superblockbuster life simulator, just like it's impossible to stop playing it.
		Gamers everywhere, rejoice! Finally, a game where you can actually learn a thing or two about interacting with the opposite sex!
The second secon	Sames	If you were merely a Sims addict before, all hope is now lost. All the world's a stage, and your online Sim persona can play any part.
		Not just a great addition to EA's behemoth franchise, an essential one. Everyone needs a dog, or maybe a monkey.
	Barnes	
Warlords Battlecry II Ubi S	grames	Somewhat of a letdown in terms of story and gameplay, but good nonetheless. Call us in five years when our gaming rigs can handle it.  RTS and RPG, two great flavors that go great together—especially when stirred together with a big gnarty wizard's staff!

### THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR

■ We've run out of room to include all of The Sims expansion packs (what are we up to now, 116?), but we'll give Superstar the nod if you want to take your virtual lifestyle even further. So, when are we going to see The Sims: Magazine Editor?



### **RCT2: WACKY WORLDS**

→ It doesn't add much to the Roller Coaster Tycoon experience aside from turning your regular high-thrill coaster into a highthrill coaster with an igloo or Buddha statue in front of it. It might be nice to look at while standing in line, but great fun it is not



PC



### > XBOX TOP 50 TERM NINJA'S SYSTEM OF CHOICE

La contraction of the contractio			-
Apex	Atan	This racer is fantastic to look at and plays well enough to sit snugly between Project Gotham Racing and Gran Turismo on your shelf.	8
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Vivendi Universal	A beautiful-looking <i>Dungeons &amp; Dragons</i> -based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	The Legacy of Kain story picks up where the original Blood Ornen left off, with you in control of the evil-yet-likeable vampire Kain.	8
Burnout	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	
Cel Damage	Microsoft	Crazy cartoon car combat with great use of cel-shading and varied multiplayer options. It can quickly become repetitive, however,	
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	Everybody's favorite rally racer, Colin McRae, has a brand-new game featuring finely tuned physics and car damage.	8
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller			8
NAME OF TAXABLE PROPERTY.	Sega	It's hard to improve upon the original, but that didn't stop Sega from trying. Twice. The setting is new, but it plays pretty much the same.	8
Dead or Alive 3	Tecmo	It's not the deepest of fighters, but it definitely competes for the best-looking prize. Plus, the girls are back in all their bouncy glory.	
Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball		Pro tip: When playing DOAX, have your TV remote close by. If Morn bursts in, hit the surf button and flip to the History Channel. She'll be proud.	
Fatal Frame	Tecrno	It's creepy. It's gory. It's the Tecmo game without the boobs. Another of those games better enjoyed with the lights off.	8
Halo	Microsoft	The definitive reason to own an Xbox. There are plenty of secondary reasons, sure, but no Xbox owner should be without Halo.	10
High Heat 2004	3D0	The best ball-game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	9
James Bond 007: NightFire	EA Games	GoldenEye set an impossibly high standard for the Bond license, but NightFire does an admirable job of re-creating the feel of the films.	B
Jet Set Radio Future	Sega	Jet Set Radio Future has substance and an overabundance of style. Sega simplified tagging in favor of a more robust trick system.	8
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	It's a crowded genre on Xbox, with three different franchises competing for your attention. Madden is always a safe bet.	9
Max Payne	Rockstar Games	The "bullet time" effect is the big draw of this action/shooter. Inspired by Hong Kong action flicks, set against a gritty New York City.	8
MechAssault	Microsoft	It's a good single-player game, but it really shines on Xbox Live, where you're pitted against other mech pilots.	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A strong single-player campaign paves the way across the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konamı	Includes the original MGS2: Sons of Liberty, five brand-new missions featuring Solid Snake, and a slew of challenging VR missions.	9
Midnight Club II	Rockstar Games	Slightly better than Microsoft's Midtown Madness, although both are worthy additions to your library—especially if you have Xbox Live.	8
Midtown Madness 3	Microsoft	The single-player missions are nothing to write home about, but playing MM3 online is a total blast.	7
MotoGP 2	THQ	What we said: "Can only be described as the best motorcycle-racing sim on the planet." What more do you need?	9
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," Thunder 2003 should be right up your alley.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to sign up for Xbox Live, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts	Even better than the first, Vol. 2 takes you through the legendary players and teams of the NBA's storied history. A great deal of fun.	9
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities	8
NFL 2K3	Sega	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched <i>Madden</i> juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	NHL Hitz rhymes with NFL Blitz. That's no mere coincidence. Hockey with no rules is just as fun as its lawless football counterpart,	8
Panzer Dragoon Orta	Sega	Aesthetically beautiful and a dream to play. See what Saturn owners were enjoying seven years ago (the original Panzer Dragoon is included).	9
Phantom Crash	Phantagram	Xbox certainly isn't lacking in mech titles. The quirky, unique Phantom Crash has upgradeable mechs and a story-driven 1P mode.	9
Project Gotham Racing	Microsoft	The refinement of the Kudos point system is the biggest difference between Project Gotham and its Dreamcast predecessor.	8
RalliSport Challenge	Microsoft	This rally racer is one of the best examples of Xbox's power. More areade than simulation, with enough depth to please both camps.	8
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War	Activision	The single-player missions still aren't much to write home about, but at least you can play them with a pal. The online play is gravy.	8
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK Mediactive	Cel-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	8
Rocky	Ubi Soft	The best boxing game you can get for your Xbox. A technical knock-out, considering there's not much competition.	8
Sega GT 2002	Sega	Sega's answer to the Gran Turismo phenomenon. Not quite as expansive in terms of tracks and cars, but better with the details.	8
Shenmue II	Microsoft	The second chapter of Yu Suzuki's opus sees our hero Ryo traversing the streets of Hong Kong in search of his father's killer.	7
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams	Konami	A creepy port of a creepy game with a creepy bonus: a creepy extra episode of the creepy story. Play without lights for extra creepiness.	8
Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	As usual, the Star Wars universe inspires great aesthetic design to compliment Raven Software's solid sense of game design.	0
Steel Battalion	Capcom	If you want to play this game, you'll have to shell out \$200 for the massive controller. For those with the cash, it's well worth it.	8
Test Drive	Atan	Race for pink slips on the underground circuit, and live out your Vin Diesel role-playing fantasy. Or just act normal and race cars.	8
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda	An exhaustive open-ended RPG that essentially allows you to make it up as you go along, with hundreds of people to talk to.	8
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the (PS2) original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes.	8
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubí Soft	There's not much of a graphical upgrade from the PC version, but the interface and audio are improved. Goes great with Xbox Live.	8
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft	Comparisons to Metal Gear Solid were inevitable. Splinter Cell holds its own, and even outdoes Konami's behemoth at times.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	If you have to have Tony Hawk 3, improved graphics and framerate and the custom soundtrack option make this the best version to get.	9
Unreal Championship	Atan	Mindless deathmatching with great weapon design and entertaining multiplayer modes, including the sport-like Bombing Run.	8
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	A surprisingly stellar extreme-sports title that manages to make the Tony Hawk formula work on water. Watch out for the gators.	9
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	WSB2K3 is the best-looking baseball game and it has a great Franchise mode, but it's got A.I. issues that still need to be worked out.	8
FOLUME.		[OLIONAL]	

### [ROJ!]

### **GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER**

➡ We liked the original Ghost Recon, so it's only fitting that we like the new expansion disc Island Thunder, which, true to its nature, expands the experience of playing on Xbox Live. Plus it's only 30 bucks, so there's that.



### FURIOUS KARTING

Once you get bored with Furious Karting's forgettable track design and odd karma system, you might find yourself frustrated, irritable, agitated, or even testy. You should only experience the furious stage if you paid \$50 for it.



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### → GAMECUBE TOP 50 ENTERING ITS PRIME

Acclaim The graphics keep getting better each year, but the gameplay isn't keeping pace. Nice presentation, but the batting interface needs work. The game that never ends is based largely on routine chores, yard work, and interior decorating. So why is it so much fun to play? ch Spikers Easy to pick up and easy to play, like Virtua Tennis. As with most arcade sports games, it's definitely better as a multiplayer affair. Sega A surviving member of the Old School, Bomberman has earned some tenure in the industry. This time, he sports a cel-shaded look mberman Generation Maiesco rnout 2: Point of Impact Acclaim The best-looking—and best-playing—racer on the system. Be prepared to spend many hours in Crash mode. A simple but compelling game of reproduction and cannibalism. Plus, you can get "hump points." You know you're interested. Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 8 Acclaim Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on-get this-biking. Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem Nintendo This game, if you let it, will mess with your head. The insanity effects are clever (the first time) and the scenery is downright creepy. FIFA 2002 Electronic Arts Though there's always room for improvement, EA's soccer series has been fairly decent. Plus, there's no real alternative yet. Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee Godzilla & Co. wrecking cityscapes and each other, with support for up to four players. What's not to like? Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets EA Games This Potter kid seems to be pretty popular, so the folks at EA decided to make a Zelda-esque adventure based on his magical exploits High Heat 2004 300 The best ball-game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Wake Nintendo It looks and feels like the best Zelda game ever, but sailing back and forth in the overworld just feels like work. Luigi's Mansior Nintendo We all wanted Mario at launch, and we got this. Like getting socks for Christmas, it's good and comfortable, but not what we wanted Those who bought the GameCube version instead of the PS2 edition were treated to roughly the same game. Good for them, though. Madden NFL 2002 Electronic Arts There are few things better in life than three friends, Mario Party, and a healthy flow of alcoholic beverages (if you're legal, of course). Nintendo Mario Party 4 Medal of Honor: Frontline **EA Games** A new story of D-Day and the ensuing action on the French front lines. The GameCube version has a multiplayer mode the others don't. Metroid Prime Nintendo As if they dissected Super Metroid, added a dimension, and put it back together again with slick graphics. In fact, it's exactly like that. Midway What Blitz is to football, Slugfest is to baseball. If you can't sit through nine innings of the regular game, this one's for you. **NASCAR Thunder 2003** It's apparently the fastest growing "sport" in America, and Thunder 2003 is packed under the hood, including an in-depth Career mode. EA Games More of a sim than NBA Courtside, but it's the best basketball simulation available. Includes a great game of street ball, too. Sega Added to this year's version is a slick ESPN interface, an upgraded Franchise mode, and a fresh class of rookies. NRA 2K3 Sega NBA Courtside No longer under the Nintendo development umbrella, Left Field's final installment of the Courtside series is a worthy b-ball game. Nintendo **NBA Street Vol. 2 FA Sports** Even better than the first, Vol. 2 takes you through the legendary players and teams of the NBA's storied history. A great deal of fun. NCAA College Basketball 2 Sega We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities.... Pac-Man World 2 Namo Purists will yell "HERESY!" at the new Pac-Man who can take multiple hits. People who actually enjoy good games will ignore them Phantasy Star Online Epi Sega Unhealthity addictive. The pursuit of rare items helps one ignore the somewhat repetitive battle (and the \$9 monthly fee). Pikmin Nintendo Mario creator Shigery Miyamoto got the idea for this quirky strategy game from observing his personal garden. What kind of garden? Resident Evil Capcom This remake could almost be described as a new game. But is it really Resident Evil without the laughably bad voice acting? Resident Evil 0 Capcom This one actually is a brand-new game, with significant changes such as droppable items and the dirty-sounding partner swapping Sega Soccer Slam An arcade-style soccer game with off-the-wall characters, arenas, and power-ups. And it's still better than Virtua Striker! Sega Skies of Arcadia: Legend If you missed it on Dreamcast—and many of you did---you've been given a second chance. It's even got new characters Smuggler's Run: Warzones Rockstar Games An enhanced version of Smuggler's Run 2, with new vehicles and maps and an expanded multiplayer mode with support for four players Sonic Adventure 2: Raffl Remember when you and your friends held daily Sonic vs. Mario debates? Don't you feel silly now? Or at least a little old? Sonic Adventure DX Sega SA2 got an upgrade, while the original Adventure...uh, gets a bunch of old Game Gear games. Still a classic worth revisiting, though. Sure, the Sonic games were great, but \$40 may be too steep an asking price for a collection of old and unenhanced games. Sonic Mega Collection Star Fox Adventures Rare's last Nintendo effort took forever, but Star Fox Adventures takes its inspiration from The Legend of Zelda-and that ain't bad. Nintendo Star Wars Roque Squadron II: Roque Leader LucasArts At times, Raque Leader synchs closely with scenes from the movies, Impressive when you consider it took only nine months to make Star Wars: The Clone Wars LucasArts All the intense action of the movie, without melodramatic writing and weak acting. As with many GC garnes, multiplayer is a big draw. Maybe not quite as groundbreaking as Super Mario 64 was, but even when Nintendo "misses," it makes a big splash. Super Mario Sunshine Nintendo Super Monkey Ball Monkeys in balls! An exceptional game based on a simple concept; some of the later levels will eat you for lunch. Sega Super Monkey Ball 2 Even more monkeys in balls running around for your entertainment! The extra garne modes add guite a bit to the simple concept Super Smash Bros. Melec Nintendo A Nintendo fanatic's dream, if only for the exhaustive gallery of collectible Nintendorabilia. Plus, you can beat the crap out of Jigglypuff. TimeSplitters 2 Fidos Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 For those with the Dual Shock hardwired into their psyche, switching over to the oddly shaped GameCube controller can prove difficult. Activision Ultimate Muscle Bandai If the soap-opera antics of the WWE don't go far enough over the top, perhaps the wacky Ultimate Muscle will be more to your liking Wario World After all this time, Wario has become quite effective at reclaiming his stolen treasure. Too effective, as Wario World is over far too quickly. Nintendo Nintendo Great wave physics, awesome weather effects, and a deeper control scheme than the original. An underrated gem of a racer. Wave Race: Blue Storm THO Ratings have cooled and Stone Cold has had some run-ins with John Law, but that's irrelevant, as wrestling games will always sell. If you absolutely must have an X-Men fighting game, this is your best bet. Better fighters exist, but they don't feature Wolverine.

### [BUYI] I

### ANIMAL CROSSING

If you buy Animal Crossing in September, you'll get it just in time to see the leaves change color. And to rip off that wicked area rug from Patty the Hippo, who previously stiffed you on that delivery job a while back. Yeah, this game is fun



### [AVOID!] **TUBE SLIDER**

Now that we've spent some quality time with F-Zero GX (look for the review next issue]. Tube Slider looks even less exhibaration in comparison. If a sequel is done, we want better track design, and dammit, more speed



### GBA TOP 50 TWICE AS NICE

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Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turr
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Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turn-based military strategy that should be a part of everyone's GBA library. Once you get sucked in, it's hard to pull yourself away.	8
Advance Wars 2	Nintendo	Wars 2 only adds a single new unit, but it's chock full of new maps, new terrain, and new CO powers.	8
Baseball Advance	THO	There are only four stadiums and no multiplayer, but it's still a great game of baseball.	
Breath of Fire 2	Capcom	It's a port of the old SNES RPG, but we'd be willing to bet that quite a few of you missed it the first time. Don't repeat that mistake!	7
Car Battler Joe	Natsume	A fun and unique Car-PG that lets you build cars, add parts and weapons, and travel the world in search of your father.	7
Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow	Konamı	Better sound and castle design than Harmony of Dissonance, but much too short. The soul system is ace, though.	8
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	Konami	Castlevania is meant to be played in two dimensions, and this game shows why. A complex card system governs your special abilities.	9
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami	The second Castlevania is one of the best reasons to own a Game Boy Advance. The colors are brighter and the bosses are bigger.	9
Chu Chu Rocket!	Sega	A highly addictive and highly cute puzzle action game from Sega that's best played with multiple friends. Mouse mania!	7
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity	Nintendo	A new F-Zero based on the classic SNES game, with improved graphics, new tracks, and four-player support.	8
Final Fight One	Capcom	Another enhanced port of an SNES original. How come mayors of large cities don't go on ass-kicking rampages anymore?	8
Golden Sun	Nintendo	A deep combat engine and brilliant graphics make this one of the better RPGs available on GBA.	8
Golden Sun: The Lost Age	Nintendo	Picks up right where the first one lets off. The battle system remains basically unchanged, but the puzzles are much more rewarding.	8
Gradius Galaxies	Konami	Konami's classic shooter series translates to the portable very well. Great graphics and plenty of challenge.	7
GT Advance 3	THO	The GT Advance series has always been technically marvelous, and GTA3 (yeah, we know) finally has a battery-save function!	8
Guilty Gear X Advance	Sammy	Not surprisingly, the animation and soundtrack take a hit, but it still plays like its big brother versions.	7
Iridion II	Majesco	The first Iridion served as a neat technical demo, but its sequel concentrates more on having good gameplay. Another quality shooter.	7
Kirby: Nightmare in Dreamland	Nintendo	A remake of the NES classic Kirby's Adventure with updated graphics and multiplayer support.	8
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Namco	Straying from the original formula, this Klonoa is more of a puzzle game than a platformer, with great graphics and sound.	8
Konami Krazy Racers	Konami	A Mario Kart-esque mascot racer filled with classic Konami characters like Dracula, Goemon, and MGS's Ninja.	7
Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past	Nintendo	Invite three friends and you've got a bona fide Zelda party. Drink red medicine tilt you puke and skinny dip in Lake Hylia!	9
Lufia: The Ruins of Lore	Atlus	Perennially overshadowed by Square's offerings, the Lufia series is just as engaging as Final Fantasy. It's also more challenging.	8
Lunar Legend	Ubi Soft	The anime cut-scenes and superb voice acting may be gone, but the great Lunar gameplay and story remain intact.	8
Mario Kart: Super Circuit	Nintendo	A balanced blend of Super Mario Kart and Mario Kart 64 that even includes all the tracks from the former.	8
Mega Man and Bass	Capcom	It's hard, so very hard. But what Mega Man game isn't? Play as either Mega Man or Wily robot Bass; each one has different abilities.	7
Mega Man Battle Network 2	Capcom	More of an RPG than an platformer, the Battle Network series is a nice change of pace for Mega Man and pals.	7
Mega Man Battle Network 3	Capcom	Battle Network 3 is pretty much more of the same with a few minor additions, but it's already a great series.	8
Mega Man Zero	Capcom	A difficult yet engaging installment of the X side story played as Zero, who is equipped with an arm cannon and beam saber.	7
Metroid Fusion	Nintendo	The follow-up to Super Metroid is eight years late, but the wait was well worth it. An adventure that ends way too quickly.	9
Ninja Five-0	Konami	A challenging platformer that brings back fond memories of Bionic Commando. Complete with throwing stars and katanas.	7
Phantasy Star Collection	THQ	Straightforward classic RPG action that's been overlooked for far too long. Includes Phantasy Star 1, 2, and 3.	9
Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire	Nintendo	Aside from 2-on-2 battles, the first GBA <i>Pokemon</i> combo doesn't really change the original formula.	7
Rayman Advance	Ubi Soft	Rayman is just as good in 2D as he is in 3D. It looks great and provides a decent challenge.	8
Sonic Advance 2	THQ	Sonic Advance 2 is much improved over the first one, and it connects to the GameCube's Sonic Adventure games to boot.	8
Sonic Pinball Party	Sega	Not limited to just hedgehogs, Sega's solid pinballer features tables from the classics Nights and Samba de Amigo.	8
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	Sure, the limiting button configuration prevents SFA3 from being a completely accurate port, but it's great nonetheless.	8
Super Dodgeball Advance	Atlus	You're not going to find that many dodgeball games on the market, so thankfully this one is worthwhile. Better in multiplayer.	7
Super Ghouls & Ghosts	Capcorn	Remember how frustrated you got playing through Ghouls & Ghosts? Get ready to do it all over again.	8
Super Mario Advance: Super Mario 2	Nintendo	Aside from the odd narning system, you can't really complain about a portable version of Super Mario Bros. 2.	8
Super Mario Advance 2: Mario World	Nintendo	There's really not much else that can be said except "portable Super Mario World" and "you should buy it."	9
Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island	Nintendo	Yoshi is the star of this show, one of the greatest 2D platformers ever put to silicon. There are even a couple of new bonus levels.	9
Super Monkey Ball Jr.	THQ	An excellent port of the game that sold many a Gamecube. THQ even included Monkey Bowling and Monkey Fight!	8
Super Puzzle Fighter II	Capcom	Sometimes, you just get bored with Tetris. Puzzle Fighter II is a fantastic port of a fantastic and highly addictive game. Buy it now.	8
Super Street Fighter II	Capcom	The combo of SFA3, Guilty Gear X Advance, and Super Street Fighter 2 is devastating. And you don't even need any quarters!	8
Tactics Ogre: The Knights of Lodis	Atlus	An incredibly deep strategy RPG with a branching story line and a rewarding battle system.	•
The Lost Vikings	Blizzard	Büzzard's classic puzzler finds new life, but without any of the extras or enhancements one might expect.	7
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	It's amazing how Activision managed to cram <i>Tony Hawk</i> into a cartridge while keeping the essence of the console version intact.	8
Virtua Tennis	THQ	A surprisingly faithful rendition of the console versions with good visuals and an engaging World Tour mode. The best tennis on GBA.	8
Wario Land 4	Nintendo	The Wario series of platformers has always been excellent, and this one is no exception. Short but incredibly sweet.	8

[BUY!] I

Wario Ware, Inc.

### **CAR BATTLER JOE**

If we had to guess, we'd say that approximately seven of you guys and girls have ever heard of Car Battler Joe, the Car-P6 (an't that clever!) that has you building custom cars and weapons in search of your long-lost father. Find it before it's gone forever.

Nintendo



### [AVOID!]

A large collection of microgames fuels Wario Ware's madcap mayhem. The freshest game we've seen in a long time.

### **CONTRA ADVANCE EX**

A port of the SNES classic Contra 3: The Alien Wars might be tempting, but we urge you to resist: Konami has taken out the weapon switching and power bombs for no discernable reason, other than to make it super-extra-difficult.



GBA





HE'S OLD! HE'S PISSED!

# GAME GEEZER

### POOR DESIGN, DUMB CHARACTERS, AND NO CONTROL: THE BLAME GAME SUCKS.

"Hey, Game Geezer, we have a ques—. Whoa, who's that doofus on your TV? Is that Forrest Gump?"

No, it's not Forrest Gump, you dimwits. It's Elvis Presley. He was a famous rock 'n' roll singer back in the 1950s.

"No way. What's up with his hips and stuff? Dude looks like he has epilepsy."

Yeah, that's what lots of adults said at the time, too. When he played music on one TV show, they would show him only from above the waist.

"Say what?"

You heard me. They thought it was immoral and indecent to show his gyrating hips. They thought kids would become deprayed just by watching him.

"That's like the dumbest thing we've ever heard."

Yep. Almost as dumb as when the U.S. Senate decided to waste taxpayers' money back in 1954 by holding hearings to decide whether comic books led to juvenile delinguency.

"Huh?"

That's right. The lead witness, one Dr. Frederick Wertham, wrote an entire book about the evils of comics, called Seduction of the Innocent and testified that comics created "an atmosphere of deceit and

cruelty." Kind of like the Senate.

"Uh, Mr. Geezer? You're kind of boring us this month. We like it better when you make jokes and stuff."

You want a joke? OK, here:
Your mama's so fat, she puts
lipstick on with a paint roller.
Happy now? Now, pay
attention and try learning
something for a change. The
point is, this whole country has
been acting like a dang 4-yearold, looking around for
somebody or something to
blame anytime anything goes
wrong, rather than taking on
some personal responsibility.

Fifty years ago, it was rock music and comic books. Today, it's videogames. Every time some socially maladjusted kid commits a crime now, you can count the seconds until the newscaster mentions that the kid played videogames. As if every other kid in America—most of whom are completely well-adjusted human beings—didn't also play videogames.

The problem isn't games. It isn't any form of pop culture. It's stupid people breeding. The way I figure it, most people shouldn't even have a license to drive, let alone a license to have kids. But no, they keep breeding. So what you have now is entire families.

and in some cases, states, full of stupid people who go around blaming things they don't understand when something goes wrong. Nope, it couldn't be our lousy parenting or the underfinanced, crappy school system. It must be those darn videogames!

Right now, there are a bunch of politicians and groups around the country scheming to restrict or outlaw the sale of videogames to minors. The thinking being, I guess, that if a kid can't buy a copy of GTA3, the world will be a little safer. I have a better idea. Instead of checking kids' IDs when they buy games, how about we start checking parents' IQs instead? Sorry, son, I know you want GTA, but your dad is pretty much a total dumbass, so we're gonna have to say no." But who am I kidding? Nothing's gonna change.

Not ever.

Not until we find something new to blame. ■





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www.bandai.com	33
www.cdv.de/english	37
www.ctiashow.com	99
www.dreamcatchergames.co	m 85
www.eidos.com	100
www.ea.com	39-43
www.ebgames.com 4	-5, 48-49,50a-b,
www.konami.com	2-3
www.lucasarts.com	26a-j
www.midway.com	25
http://butterfinger.com/	31
www.n-gage.com/preorder	23
www.sega.com	35
www.scea.com	20-21
www.take2games.com	11
www.take2games.com	47
www.grindmovie.com	17
www.wizards.com	6-7

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